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Dean Rusk, The Good Soldier—*Ronald Steel*

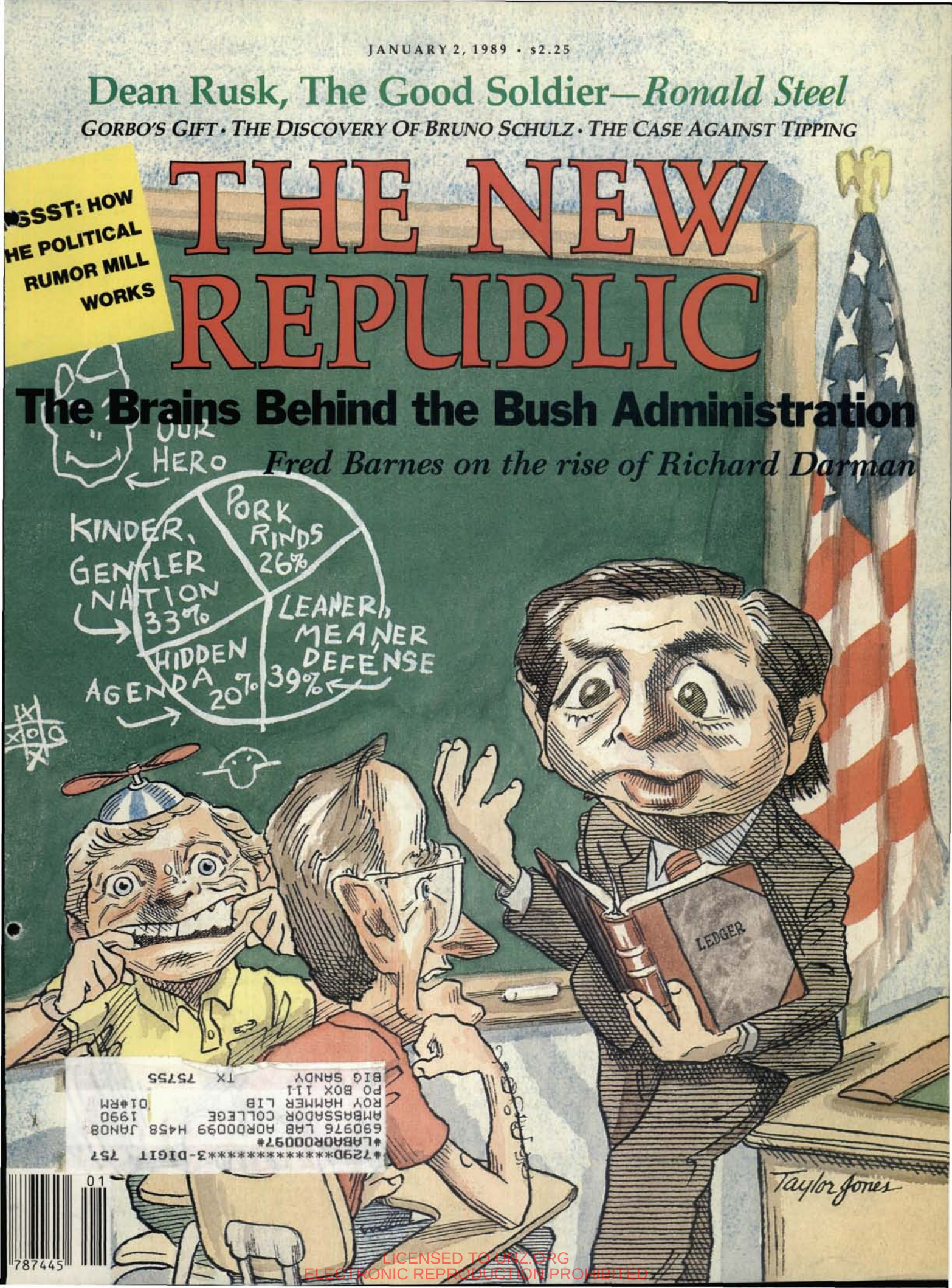
GORBO'S GIFT • THE DISCOVERY OF BRUNO SCHULZ • THE CASE AGAINST TIPPING

SSST: HOW THE POLITICAL RUMOR MILL WORKS

THE NEW REPUBLIC

The Brains Behind the Bush Administration

Fred Barnes on the rise of Richard Darman



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CORRESPONDENCE

PHONY THING

To the editors:

Though the focus of your November 28 Notebook item "Rather Phony" was the phoniness of network coverage of the nation's elections, your rationale for defining the coverage as phony missed the real issue. First, exit poll results are not "the news." They are merely predictors of the news, which is who the winners will be. Networks rely on exit poll results merely because they are the only information available in time for their TV programs. Where networks fail as an institution and are "phony" is in their reporting of exit poll results as news.

Second, it is not those individuals in the West who haven't voted yet (when networks project the winner) who are denied their right of citizenship when they don't go to the polls. They exercise their right by not voting. But your attitude that "every vote is equally important—or more accurately, unimportant—irrespective of when it's cast" ignores the fact that Western state ballots carry the names of candidates for many offices, not just the president, and the failure of voters to vote because of early presidential winner projections negatively affects the broader spectrum of democracy. Although voting is a privilege, as a society we need to help citizens understand the importance of their participation, not provide them with yet another easy excuse to avoid it.

LEE KEMPER
Sacramento, California

SUNUNU STANDS ALONE

To the editors:

After reading Fred Barnes's article "What's Sununu?" (December 12), I'd like to set the record straight concerning the proclamation I signed commemorating the 20th anniversary of the death of American servicemen aboard the USS *Liberty*. I did *not* issue a "similar" proclamation to that released by the governor of the State of New Hampshire. My proclamation made no mention of Israel, made no comment about how the incident happened, drew no conclusions, and attributed no blame. It simply commemorated and memorialized the deaths of American servicemen in the line of duty.

MARIO M. CUOMO
Governor
Albany, New York

CLEARING THE BEACH

To the editors:

Your Notebook piece "Federalism and Nuclear Power" (December 12), at least as it refers to the Seabrook nuclear power plant, lacks any understanding of the controversy over evacuation planning. You talk about the lack of an evacuation plan as if it were a mere technicality and suggest that local (and state) officials simply "refuse to designate" an emergency plan in order to prevent licensing of the plant. Their opposition is based upon the simple geographical fact that evacuation of the area surrounding the Seabrook plant in the event of a fast-moving serious accident is impossible. The plant was sited on a salt marsh directly upwind of several barrier beaches, access to which is extremely limited. Late on a summer Sunday afternoon it can take hours to travel the two miles or so across one of the very few roads leaving the beaches. And those crowds do not include the thousands who live in the beach communities. They also aren't in fear for their lives, as they would be in the event of an evacuation. Few if any local officials have taken a public position against nuclear power. Nearly all are motivated solely by their responsibility to protect their constituents in the event of a catastrophic accident.

CHRISTOPHER M. WELCH
City Councillor
Newburyport, Massachusetts

CRYING UNCLE

To the editors:

With the advent of the new year, TRB now mockingly visualizes Canada as the 51st state of the United States ("Come to Uncle," December 12). Well, we citizens of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, who have been advocating statehood since 1899, did not find this particularly amusing. A plurality of Puerto Ricans have been clamoring for a referendum to decide our future political status, but the political establishment of the mainland keeps brushing us off. A majority of Americans still do not know that Puerto Rico is a territory of the United States, and that our 3.8 million inhabitants are American citizens by birth. Since 1898 young Puerto Ricans have spilled blood in every war the United States has been involved in, and yet we are denied the right to vote for congressmen and the president. Some political hotshots are advocating statehood for the District of Columbia. Why D.C. and not Puerto Rico, which has a larger population?

EDGAR A. VÉLEZ
Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

HORTHY'S HOME RULE

To the editors:

I don't know who is Richard Pipes's authority on Adm. Miklós Horthy ("No Idol of Anti-Semites," Correspondence, November 28). I was a Hungarian citizen from my birth in 1915 to 1939, when I left in the last minute to get away from Hitler by joining the French Foreign Legion, and I saw Horthy in a very different light. Hungary was the most anti-Semitic country in Europe after Poland for generations. We Jews were officially second-class citizens under Admiral Horthy's rule. For instance, no Jew would ever be admitted to the Ludovika Academia (Hungary's West Point). No Jew would be admitted to the police force in any role. No Jew could buy land. There was a very strict quota for Jews for all universities, especially for medicine and engineering. No Jew was ever admitted to the University for Forestry and Mining—which was in my own hometown of Sopron, traditionally a hotbed of anti-Semitism.

Although I was not in Hungary after 1939, I know from my late twin brother, who went back after the war, that not only did the Hungarians not help the Jews, but they wholeheartedly helped in their roundup for deportations to the camps, which is proved by the fact that the percentage of Jews who died there—including my whole family—is greater than that of German Jews.

ERWIN FUCHS
Seattle, Washington

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

ISSUE 3,859

WASHINGTON, D.C.

JANUARY 2, 1989

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FROM WASHINGTON

PLASTICS

Editor's note: this column was written by Leon Wieseltier.

"I declare the war is over": suddenly everybody in Washington sounds like Phil Ochs. The war, of course, is the cold one, between the United States and the Soviet Union. The enlightened despotism of Mikhail Gorbachev is deemed to have ended a period in history. There is an air of parturition in the capital; the old has gone, the new has almost come. American policy-makers seem suddenly unburdened of the most oppressive anxiety that they ever had to feel. The eschatological speculations that Gorbachev has engendered in these dour and disabused men and women is a measure of the pressure that the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union since the splitting of the atom has, quite properly, put on their minds. Now they dare to wonder if they will always have to live by their nerves.

Is the cold war over? The question is thoroughly confused. If the standard is philosophical, the cold war ended a long time ago. If the standard is strategic, the cold war will not end for a long time. If you believe that the cold war is a contest between ideas, between democracy and totalitarianism, which will end with the collapse of one of the ideas, then you must agree that it ended decades ago, when communism as a system of belief collapsed in the Second, that is, the Soviet-controlled, World. (For different reasons, the First World and the Third World did not really remark on the collapse of communism until later; their intellectuals and politicians continued the argument about revolution while the grandchildren of revolution sullenly dreamed of potatoes and jeans.) If you believe that the cold war is a contest between great powers, then you must agree that it will survive the collapse of communism, because the collapse of communism is not the same thing as the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Indeed, Mikhail Gorbachev's thesis appears to be: either communism collapses or the Soviet Union collapses. If *glasnost* is proceeding more swiftly than *perestroika*, that is not only because political reform is more immediate in its consequences than economic reform, but also because Gorbachev has grasped that the crisis of communism is the solution to the crisis of the Soviet Union. This thrilling man has understood the extent to which his country's turgid, immobile institutions of politics and economics were inscribed with certain theories about the individual and society, about power and the blandishments of control. It did not take long for the new Soviet liberalizers to see that they are fighting a force more profound and more prestigious than Brezhnevism and its corruptions.

No, Gorbachev is not reading *Notes on the State of Virginia*. He is moving, it appears, in the direction of an authoritarianism, which means, for a totalitarian society, in the direction of air. (If he succeeds, not the least of his achievements will have been to consign Jeane Kirkpatrick to the dustbin of history.) He is presiding over the emergence of civil society, over Hegel's revenge. He is substituting the authoritarianism of a government for the authoritarianism of a party, for the sake of efficiency. All of this, naturally, in the name of communism, and for a restoration of Soviet strength in the future. Still, the citizens of this communist state are being urged to act like citizens, not like communists. Gorbachev's communism has a certain unitarian quality. It is theologically too paltry to support a religious war.

The cold war, of course, was about philosophy and strategy. Philosophically, we won. The god that failed failed. Strategically, the situation is rather more complicated. There is a sense in which, for the Soviets, philosophy still casts a shadow over strategy. The collapse of communism is partly responsible for, say, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, or the unilateral Soviet reduction in its European forces, because it was the theory and practice of communism that threw the Soviet economy into the condition that made those commitments too costly. The Soviet military finds itself threatened by the social and economic consequences of precisely the ideology it is dedicated to defend. A nice joke, for Americans. Yet it is essential that we remember that the rivalry is not over. The Soviet Union retains the power to destroy the United States; and American power retains its association with freedom. Inside the Soviet Union, Gorbachev represents a revolution. Outside the Soviet Union, he represents a time out.

For American foreign policy, this is the most plastic hour since the end of the Second World War. I believe that there still is sense in thinking about American advantage. The Soviet Union has given notice that for a while it will turn a little away from the world to get itself in shape, that it is more vexed by its weakness at home than by its weakness abroad, that it will allow itself to be pushed a bit here and probed a bit there. Those bits add up. The truth about Gorbachev's spectacular foreign policy initiatives, about the blizzard of proposals that Moscow has rained on Washington for years now, is that they are designed to make order out of a temporary retreat. Gorbachev is the least paranoid man who ever ruled Russia. He has his eye on the next century. So should we: the economic abjection of the Soviet Union leaves the United States with an opportunity to improve its position around the world for the next 50 years, to prepare itself against the day, which will certainly come, when the Soviet Union "catches up."

Calm down. I am not proposing a first strike against the Soviet land-based missile force. I am not proposing any American action that will give Ligachev his chance. But I am afraid that American diplomacy has become too passive, too reactive, too unreflective about the notion that its task is to "help Gorbachev." I have very little evidence of the historical imagination of George Bush or James Baker. Do they see, in Europe, in the Middle East, in Angola, in Central America, that this is a time for American activism, a time for Washington to rain proposals on Moscow? Soviet pressure on the PLO, Soviet pressure on the Sandinistas, Soviet pressure on the Cubans, is possible. A larger Soviet reduction in conventional forces in Europe is possible. A Soviet reduction in strategic nuclear weapons is possible. A treaty banning weapons from space is possible. But not unless the Americans rouse themselves from the fantasy and the torpor of the last Reagan years. Not unless we see the continuities along with the discontinuities. Faiths die; interests live. The world is never too good for realism. □

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JANUARY 2, 1989

GORBA CLAUS

If someone gives you a nice Christmas present, you say, "Thank you, and a Merry Christmas to you, too." And you do so even if the gift was given not entirely for altruistic reasons, but also because the giver wanted to impress the neighbors and nonplus his critics, and because he couldn't afford the upkeep on the thing he is giving away. That's how the West should respond to Mikhail Gorbachev's promise to withdraw unilaterally some 50,000 troops and 5,000 tanks from Central Europe by 1991, and to reduce total Soviet strength by 500,000 troops, 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery pieces, and 800 airplanes. Thank you. Do come again.

We in the West should also be grateful—not to Gorbachev, but to God—that we may be witnessing the arrival of a Soviet leader who is ready to abandon the imperialistic aims of his predecessors and join the rest of mankind in a search for lasting peace, economic development, and an end to the global threat of environmental disaster. It is cause for rejoicing that a Soviet leader would stand before the United Nations and say that "all of us, and primarily the stronger of us, must . . . rule out any outward-oriented use of force," and that "freedom of choice is a universal principle that should allow for no exceptions," and that "no genuine progress is possible at the expense of the rights and freedoms of individuals and nations, or at the expense of nature."

To be sure, there is no way of knowing whether Gorbachev means all that his words seem to imply (an end to the Brezhnev Doctrine? eventual freedom for Estonia and other occupied nations of Eastern Europe?). And we certainly would not go so far as the *New York Times*, which compared Gorbachev's message to Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points. Wilson's ideas were inherently revolutionary, after all. Gorbachev's seem striking only in the context of his nation's history. He is promising to forsake the U.S.S.R.'s long-standing effort to dominate and enslave mankind, and instead to join in the very endeavor launched by Wilson. Still, Gorbachev gives evidence of being a sincere convert, and we can only welcome him.

Actually, we more than welcome him. We marvel at him. In his domestic reforms, he is a visionary and a courageous, radical reformer. He realizes that the Soviet Union is a decrepit, backward country. This fact was underlined once more by the Armenian earthquake, as this superpower had to appeal to the rest of the world—even to tiny countries such as Lebanon and Israel—for such things as blankets, tents, medicine, and basic construction equipment. To modernize his country—indeed, to prevent its collapse—Gorbachev has instituted *perestroika*, risking the wrath of entrenched interests, and *glasnost*, risking domestic disorder and the dissolution of the Soviet empire.

The difficulties and dangers of Gorbachev's policies were exemplified in the aftermath of his U.N. speech. Even before the Armenian tragedy, the major topic on

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Moscow streets and in the Soviet press was not his dramatic global gesture but domestic woes. The *Washington Post* quoted one woman in an outdoor food line as saying, "I'm glad we're talking with the Americans. Maybe they can send us some food." In Armenia the next day, Soviet troops could not concentrate wholly on rescue efforts; some had to defend themselves from stone-throwers, and others had to keep Armenians and Azerbaijanis from killing each other.

IT WOULD BE out of character for Americans not to wish Gorbachev well, and from President Reagan on down, Americans are rooting for his success. A few conservatives contend that he is playing a trick on the West, trading mere promises for the technology and economic aid it will take to repair his system and resume the conquest of the world. Perhaps. But even if that is Gorbachev's intention, the trick is unlikely to work. The repair job will take too long, and Western help will in the meanwhile be too marginal. (The more likely danger is that Gorbachev will not survive the turmoil he has generated, rendering his intentions irrelevant, or that he will sacrifice his agenda for political survival.)

It is time for even skeptics to concede that Gorbachev is offering not mere tokens, but substantial evidence of good intentions: the beginning of withdrawals from Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Angola, and, of course, the latest initiative. The resignation of Army Chief of Staff Sergei Akromaev, apparently in protest over the unilateral nature of Gorbachev's announced troop withdrawal, serves to underline the significance of his moves.

What should the West do in response? There is considerable sentiment—notably on the left in Europe—to forgo the modernization of NATO's nuclear weapons or let defense spending levels drop, on the assumption that the cold war really is over. Even such a sensible centrist as Sir Michael Howard of Oxford, president of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, argued last September that if the West wants a constructive relationship with the Soviet Union, it should "see Gorbachev's initiatives not as challenge, but as opportunity, and . . . match or outmatch him in offers of arms reductions."

Howard said he feared that the West would "conduct a skillful delaying action" in order to preserve the status quo and "block Gorbachev's radical proposals, or counter them with demands for radical troop cuts and redeployments which, however attractive to Gorbachev himself, will be quite unacceptable to his military leadership and their political allies." This approach of "continued confrontation," said Howard, could "wear the man down," and "after that it may be another generation before a Soviet leader emerges with the energy to try again."

We agree that it would be wrong to contribute substantially to Gorbachev's downfall, but we question whether the West truly has much influence over his fate. Neither massive, unilateral troop reductions by NATO nor a decision to denuclearize Europe is likely to keep him in power. And if we take these steps only to see him fall from power anyway (a very real possibility in any event, given the domestic obstacles he faces), then we will face his successors—a reactionary and militaristic bunch, presumably—at a grave security disadvantage.

Gorbachev's plan to withdraw 5,000 Soviet tanks from the Central Front leaves 12,000 Warsaw Pact tanks behind, 5,000 of them Soviet, facing 6,500 on the NATO side. Gorbachev has not said whether the 5,000 to be withdrawn will be from the store of 7,200 modern tanks (still being produced at the rate of 3,000 per year) or from 10,000 obsolescent models dating back to the 1950s. It is encouraging that he has promised to withdraw combat assault units and other offensive equipment from Central Europe, diminishing chances for a surprise attack, but the West needs parity in tanks, or at least something much closer to that, to feel secure. Gorbachev's Christmas gift would move us only one-third of the way to parity.

Similarly, Gorbachev's proposal for a total reduction of 10,000 tanks, including those stationed in the Western Soviet Union, will leave 47,000 on the Warsaw Pact side, compared with 22,000 in all of NATO Europe. Gorbachev offered to remove 8,500 artillery pieces from the Soviet arsenal, but this leaves the Soviets with 9,500, to NATO's 4,000. He proposed a cut of 800 Soviet combat aircraft, but this will leave 2,000 planes in the East, to 1,400 in the West.

What's clearly needed is a verifiable negotiated agreement between East and West on conventional weapons. With the intent to pre-empt, Gorbachev delivered his unilateral-reductions proposal two days before NATO's defense ministers announced the West's position of parity-with-verification. Gorbachev got rave publicity (except at home), while NATO's proposal got yawns.

THE UPSHOT IS a public relations problem. Even before Gorbachev's initiative, the West was in the awkward position of having to ask for massive Soviet conventional arms cuts in exchange for meager NATO cuts. Though the logic is sound—lasting stability means rough parity, after all, and they're starting off with lots more weapons than we have—it has an ungenerous ring to it. Now that Gorbachev is playing the role of global Santa Claus, it will be even harder for the West to maintain public support in its quest for disproportionate Soviet arms cuts. But it must persevere.

As commentators have endlessly noted, Gorbachev's strategic savvy, his flair for drama, and his acute sensitivity to the yearnings of mankind add up to a stiff challenge to George Bush. There is reason to worry that Bush is too unimaginative and narrow to measure up, and that Europe will swoon before the hero of the East. Indeed, many geopoliticians, such as Henry Kissinger, believe this is precisely Gorbachev's intent—to divide the Western Alliance, to do with "love" what his predecessors never could do with intimidation.

Bush can begin to counter the challenge—and to capitalize on the opportunity—by demonstrating genuine appreciation and magnanimity in his Inaugural Address, by

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enunciating his own vision for mankind's progress under freedom, and by reaffirming the resolve of the West to negotiate mutual arms reductions from a position of deterrent strength. He should remind the world that from Stalin through Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Chernenko, it was the strength of the West that preserved the peace until the day when Gorbachev arrived and reconciliation became conceivable; and that it will be through strength and solidarity—and a spirit of hope—over a period of just a few more years that the era of expensive, destructive, and ruthless competition between the East and West might end, and an era of cooperation begin.

NOTEBOOK

☐ STILL HAZY AFTER ALL THESE YEARS: Remember how long it took President Reagan to understand that Iranamok amounted to swapping arms for hostages? In his farewell news conference, Reagan proved that, as hard as it is to teach an old dog new tricks, it's even harder to get him to remember them. When asked about American hostages in the Middle East, Reagan assured everyone that George Bush will not "give in" to terrorists, will not "enter into negotiating in the sense of what kind of ransom to pay or you're just encouraging more hostage-taking." Still, "there are other channels." Specifically, "I imagine the ultimate is going to have to be somehow a negotiation with Iran, because they have control of those people." In other words: we refuse to give anything in return for the hostages; instead, we'll give something to Iran, Iran will give something to the terrorists, and the terrorists will give us the hostages. Sound familiar? Maybe someday we'll have a president courageous enough to say, when asked what he's doing to secure the release of American hostages, "Not a damn thing—which in the long run is the best strategy." But don't hold your breath.

☐ SMOKY SIGNALS:

Let-it-burn policy backed

—*Rocky Mountain News*, December 3

Revision of let-burn policy urged

—*Denver Post*, same day

(thanks to Karen Wiley, Golden, Colorado)

☐ MOODY MANHATTAN:

'Gorby Fever' sweeps Manhattan

—*Chicago Tribune*, December 7

New Yorkers take Soviet visit in stride

—same paper, same day

(thanks to Franklyn Alexander, Evanston, Illinois)

☐ DON'T EAT THE WATER:

■ Bay in Good Condition

Santa Monica Bay is usually safe to swim in, but there is a cancer risk for some who eat its white croaker fish, a report said.

—*Los Angeles Times*, December 2

(thanks to Jeffrey Segall, Santa Barbara, California)

☐ NICE TRY:

Tower spends time under scrutiny as Bush seeks to keep team clean

—*Minneapolis Star Tribune*, December 8

Bush's U.N. choice helped funnel donation to contras

—same paper, same day, same page

(thanks to Michael Thompson, St. Paul, Minnesota)

☐ THE POLITICS OF INCLUSION:

Bush surrounding himself with old friends, loyalists

—*Bangor Daily News*, November 28

Bush reaches out beyond inner circle

—*Portland* (Maine) *Press Herald*, same day

(thanks to Jim Perry, Camden, Maine)

The 'authoritarianism' of Mrs. T.

BIG SISTER

IN A SPECIAL issue of *Index on Censorship* devoted to Britain—the first ever dealing with a Western democracy—the philosopher Ronald Dworkin warns that "the very concept of liberty is being challenged and eroded by the Thatcher government." In a recent *New York Review of Books*, the British journalist Peter Jenkins points to a "narrowing of the freedom of speech" in the country. Not to be outdone, a new "underground" magazine, *Samizdat* (available in the finest British bookstores), is now monitoring the new authoritarianism. And a group called Charter '88 (echoing Czechoslovakia's Charter '77) recently petitioned Parliament in defense of liberty.

Is Britain becoming an authoritarian state? In the mass of evidence Thatcher's critics have gathered, the issues of civil liberties in Northern Ireland and government secrecy on the mainland stand out. Both touch long-standing British neuroses. And on both, the critics are wrong.

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Take government secrecy. For all the warnings of a new tyranny, neither of the most notorious actions of the Thatcher government—the banning of an ex-spy's memoirs, *Spycatcher*, and the prosecution of Clive Ponting, who leaked Falklands War secrets—involved new laws. The *Spycatcher* case rested on pre-Thatcher laws protecting confidentiality between employers and ex-employees, the Ponting case on the Official Secrets Act, which since 1911 has made it a crime to divulge any unauthorized government information, from espionage to the brand of gin drunk in No. 10 Downing Street. And in neither case did the government win. *Spycatcher* ended up making the best-seller lists in several countries. Ponting was sentenced only to the talk show circuit.

The truth is that the Thatcher government is the first since 1911 actually to reform the Official Secrets Act in a clearly liberal direction. The new bill reduces the act's scope to carefully delineated areas of defense, diplomacy, phone-tapping, criminal investigations, secret communications from other governments, and intelligence. In five of those areas, it requires for the first time that the prosecution prove harm to the public interest as a prerequisite for conviction. Critics argue that such harm will be easy to prove and that the new law could convict more leakers because it's more clearly defined. But that claim flies in the face of history: juries have a strong record of acquitting leakers. And if they do start convicting, that will likely clarify the line between legitimate government secrecy and public access, rather than extend the shroud of undifferentiated secrecy under which the British now operate.

To be sure, there is room for greater liberalization of government secrets in Britain. A Freedom of Information Act is overdue. But that Thatcher's secrecy law reform by itself represents a threat to British liberty is absurd. In fact, it's a small step forward. And it's worth pointing out the social context: Thatcher has expanded freedoms elsewhere. Deregulating the media alone has spawned a mass of new newspapers, radio stations, and magazines—a real increase in freedom of information and speech. Her critics would be more credible if they conceded as much.

THEY WOULD also be more convincing if they focused on the real battle for British civil liberties: in Ulster. In the last few weeks, the right to silence in custody has been abrogated and access to the media curtailed. An accused terrorist's refusal to answer questions after arrest can now be interpreted at trial as evidence of guilt. The context of this change is that paramilitaries are trained to say nothing in custody. At trial, alibis are then routinely provided by fellow terrorists, a tactic that Ulster judges guess stymies three out of four terrorist trials.

The media ban applies only to direct radio or television interviews with individuals belonging to 12 pro-terrorist organizations, ranging from the Irish Republican Army to the Loyalist Ulster Volunteer Force. Their views can still be broadcast indirectly (voice-overs on a still photo are allowed). All controls are lifted before elections. The measure aims to restrict publicity for, and lower the prestige of, terrorism. A tougher law has been in force in the Irish Republic since 1976, and has been credited with a drop in support for Sinn Fein, the mouthpiece of the IRA.

There's no point pretending that civil liberties are not infringed by these measures. The whittling away of the right to silence is a drastic step, merited only by drastic circumstances—in this case the continued high level of terrorism in the province. This is why extending it to peaceful mainland Britain, as Thatcher proposes, makes no sense. The same goes for her misguided proposal to extend the media ban to the mainland.

But for real civil libertarians, the argument cannot stop there. The philosophical value of the Ulster proposals is that they highlight the choice serious liberals are prepared to make and today's civil libertarians hardly recognize: the dilemma of securing civil liberties for a few at the expense of undermining them for the many. Put another way, in Ulster, a crisis of civil liberties *already* exists. It is called terrorism: a sustained, professional attempt to terrorize a society out of democratic politics. As the moderate Catholic leader John Hume recently pointed out, of the nearly 3,000 people killed since the present troubles began, 55 percent have been civilians, 69 percent of whom were Catholics, the people this war has allegedly been waged for. Forty percent of those Catholics were killed by the IRA. In all, six times as many have been killed by so-called Republicans as by the British army.

To say that there is a dilemma of civil liberties here is to make more than the obvious point that the dead are not free. Nor is it to endorse the hysterical right-wing argument that crime undermines citizens' civil liberties and therefore demands fewer civil liberties for criminals. What is happening in Ireland is not a matter of crime. Crime may impede individuals' freedom of movement, but it does not affect their fundamental freedom of speech or religion. Terrorism does. Try, for example, to exercise freedom of speech or religion in Belfast. Try, in fact, to do anything that we consider a normal democratic activity: edit a newspaper, write this article, make a speech against violence, run for office. The price for such mundane bravery—the bullet in a child's head, the bomb under the family car—is paid almost daily.

This price does not hand Thatcher a writ for dictatorship. But her liberal critics lose credibility on civil liberties by remaining so complacent about the uniquely anti-liberal phenomenon of political terror. There is a case—if an agonizing one—for curtailing some civil liberties when other, equally fundamental liberties are at stake. And that case is a liberal one. It says more about the sickness of British liberalism than the sickness of British liberty that in the paranoid defense of an old spy's memoirs, this more fundamental argument has hardly even been joined.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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The case against tipping.

WAITING FOR NODOUGH

THERE'S SOMETHING absurd, even downright unhealthy, about restaurant tipping in late-20th-century America. It's not just the cumbersome after-dinner mental arithmetic. And it's not just the fact that unreported tip income constitutes this country's second-biggest tax dodge. No, the trouble goes deeper than that. The next time you're sitting in a restaurant, savoring your coffee, wondering whether to tip your waiter 10, 15, or 20 percent, think about this: you're participating in the oppression of the working class. While even the most class-ridden societies of the Old World have abandoned the tip for the service charge, waiters and waitresses in America, that proud beacon of progressive egalitarianism, slave away under an essentially feudal system.

In the Third World, the tip is still alive and well. It serves as a small, mostly harmless bribe, easing the enormous gap between a small wealthy elite and the impoverished urban masses. The kind of service you get from a railway porter, a shoemaker, even a government official will be in direct proportion to the gratuity paid. The same system prevailed in Europe until the postwar era, when professionalism finally crept into service jobs. Throughout most of the Continent, restaurants now use the service charge system, whereby a standard percentage of the price of a meal is automatically added to the check. In the United States, no more than one percent of all restaurants use a service charge. But that's up from virtually none a few years ago, and there is finally a movement among restaurant owners to fall in line with other modern industrialized societies and abandon the tip altogether.

Americans spent some $11.2 billion on gratuities in 1987. We seem to like tipping in the same unreasonable way we like feet and quarts instead of meters and liters. A Gallup survey conducted in April 1987 reported that "in most situations a majority of consumers say they do not favor having a service charge added to their bill in lieu of tipping." Like their customers, restaurant owners prefer tipping because they feel it gives them control over the level of service. Most think that their wait staff would let standards slip if their tips—the bulk of their incomes in a job where the mandatory wage is $2.01 an hour—were coming to them automatically.

Waiters and waitresses have their own reasons for liking tips. Waiting is considered something of a hardship post in a society that loathes the slightest whiff of servitude. Big tips help take away the pain. "The good people can make huge amounts of money: that's their reward, that's their incentive, that's their profession," explains Michael Olsen, a service industry expert at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and a committed supporter of the tip system.

Several fine dining establishments across the country have switched from tipping to the service charge recently in the belief that waiters and waitresses, if not exactly professionals, deserve better than servants. Besides, restaurant owners say, intense competition among the wait staff can have bad side effects, like backbiting and disregard for the interests of the restaurant as a whole. They argue that, even if waiting tables doesn't call for three years of graduate school, waiting is at least as likely as lawyering to engender an ethic of professionalism that assures a high standard of service.

NOTWITHSTANDING all this high-minded argumentation, the service charge system might never have been discussed seriously in the United States had Congress not provided a strong incentive. For years the IRS has been trying in vain to crack down on underreported tips. They even issue bilingual booklets designed to help the help keep track of their incomes. But short of auditing every waiter and waitress in the country, the law is unenforceable. In 1981 an estimated 16 percent of tipping income was reported. According to a 1986 IRS report, the only type of income with a lower compliance rate was illegal income, at five percent.

So Congress decided to get tough with the restaurant industry. In 1982, as part of the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act (TEFRA), it came up with the ingenious ploy of putting the onus on owners to "allocate" tips among their waiting staff. The IRS settled on a ballpark figure—eight percent of gross restaurant revenues—as the minimum it would expect in declared tips. It was a partial success. The IRS reported a dramatic increase in the volume of declared tips: between 1982 and 1984 it picked up an extra $1.2 billion—enough to make Mike Dukakis's mouth water.

Of course, the "minimum" soon became a maximum: waiters and waitresses can sit tight as long as what they declare meets the mandatory eight percent. (Some establishments provide a computer program that does that calculation for them, thus dispensing with the messy business of actually counting the cash.) Meanwhile, Congress was getting even tougher on restaurants. It required owners to pay federal unemployment tax (1984) and Social Security tax (1988) on tipped income. The unintended result was to provide owners with a financial incentive to collude with the waiting staff to underreport tips. But the growing amount of congressionally mandated paperwork also provided an incentive, for reasons of administrative convenience, just to scrap the tip system altogether.

So switching to a service charge system is more talked about than ever before. The trade journals have issued a flurry of surveys and editorials on the relative merits of the alternatives, and one, *Restaurant Business* magazine, has endorsed the service charge outright. In an editorial titled "The Service Charge Brouhaha," it argued that government involvement has given restaurant owners little choice.

Still, to a restaurateur, adopting a mandatory service charge has its downside. One of the tip's historic strengths is that it keeps the waiting staff firmly at the front line in the battle to turn a profit. If things are going badly, the waiter is the first to know, and a tip gives him an incentive

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to do something about it. Also, what some call the Saturday Night mentality—the tendency among waiters to remember only the bumper weekend tips rather than the dry periods—suits bosses just fine. The service chargers are telling them to think again. Their package gives owners added clout as managers while taking away their safe seat at the back of the house. It also offers a recovery plan for the industry's lobbyists: the beating the restaurant industry has taken on Capitol Hill over the last few years owes not a little to its image as a haven for tax cheats.

But this furious debate has so far been lost on the tip-giver. Let's face it: as anyone who's ever stiffed a waiter or waitress can tell you, tipping is about power. Those fearful of change are sure to exploit our fears of higher restaurant checks, saucy waiters, and lost status. But aren't we bigger than that? Do we really want the moral burden of consigning a whole class of Americans to a life of tax evasion? Ask yourself those questions the next time you're at a restaurant. And the next time some servile, flattering wretch sidles up to your table and announces, "I'm Ralph and I'll be your waiter this evening," you'll realize that it's time to set him free.

ZACHARY CITRON

Pol Pot's second chance.

KILLING FIELDS II

MOUNTAINS ARE being moved to bring peace to Cambodia. Trying to end 30 years of ideological war, China and the Soviet Union have made the nation's fate one of their top concerns. Vietnam is on the verge of abandoning its dream of ruling an Indochinese bloc and has begun withdrawing some of its occupation forces from Cambodia. And Cambodian factions that have been shooting at each other for a decade are negotiating a peace accord.

There's one problem: the Khmer Rouge.

Ten years after the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia and turned out Pol Pot and his government of Democratic Kampuchea, ten years after the world saw the first irrefutable evidence of Pol Pot's regime of torture and mass executions, the Khmer Rouge have not only survived and never been punished, they have been rehabilitated. First China rebuilt the Khmer Rouge army with Thai cooperation. Political respectability came in 1982, when China, the United States, and the non-Communist Southeast Asian nations brokered a coalition between the Khmer Rouge and the non-Communist Cambodian groups of Prince Norodom Sihanouk and Son Sann. The Khmer Rouge now possess the strongest single Cambodian army, and they rule their refugee camps on the Thai border as they once ruled their country. The people are held prisoners, allowed no personal, familial, or human rights. They work like slaves and are punished severely for the smallest offense, sometimes even with death.

The survival of the Khmer Rouge now means that the once unimaginable—a Vietnamese troop withdrawal—could be followed by the unthinkable—the Khmer Rouge army marching into the vacuum left by the Vietnamese.

NO ONE DOUBTS that the Khmer Rouge are planning on returning to power. The only question is how. Pol Pot has an army of at least 25,000 soldiers, some abducted, others recruited at a young age, but all trained in his fanatic tradition. They are supplied with 500 tons of arms and ammunition each month from China. Drawing on arms caches throughout the countryside, they have staged guerrilla attacks—particularly in provinces where the Vietnamese have reduced their military presence—and have assassinated scores of local officials. Some analysts claim that Pol Pot will use his army to make an open grab for power from the northwest. Others predict that he will wait until a peace is put into place and the people are lulled into a false sense of security.

But the Khmer Rouge know that Cambodians have not forgotten the holocaust that ensued after Pol Pot's victory in 1975. An internal document circulated by the Khmer Rouge last year acknowledges that "enemies" are creating "the confusing impression in our cadres, our ranks, our people, and the world that we are shits and murderers, so the enemies and 'they' [Prince Sihanouk and the non-Communist resistance] can easily become master of our country and our people." The Khmer Rouge are trying to hold together their hard-core followers and teach them to maneuver within a coalition government without succumbing to the temptations of "capitalism," a Khmer Rouge term for democracy.

Through their camps along the Thai border with Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge control some 75,000 Cambodian refugees. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees has never protected these people; Thailand has never given them official refugee status. No one could save them this summer when Khmer Rouge soldiers began forcing them to return to Cambodia and prepare for the new war as the Vietnamese withdraw their troops. Relief workers believe as many as 12,000 people have been herded at gunpoint across the border, often in the face of heavy Vietnamese shelling.

This August members of the Thai ruling circles and the U.S. Congress came up with the same partial answer to stopping the Khmer Rouge: cut off their outside support, now. The son and adviser of Thailand's prime minister said Thailand should end its aid to the Khmer Rouge even if China does not. (Thailand knows the efficacy of such an approach. In exchange for Thai support for the Khmer Rouge, the Chinese cut off all support for the Thai Communist insurgency, which today is all but dead.) Congress passed a joint resolution asking foreign countries to stop giving aid and sanctuary to the Khmer Rouge, a request that the Reagan administration resisted. The Reagan administration is just beginning to accept that Vietnam may

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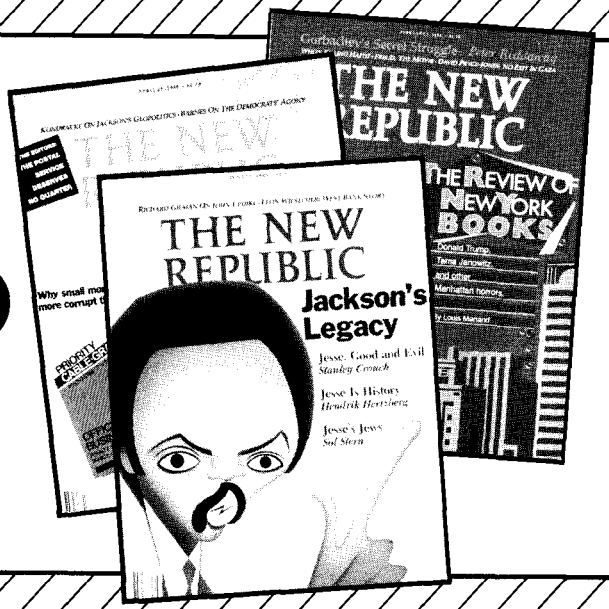

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have no choice but to withdraw from Cambodia, that thousands of its troops have already left.

What Washington doesn't seem to have grasped is that it is now in a good position to make sure the deal is done: the Vietnamese get out and stay out, the Khmer Rouge never return to power, and Cambodia does become a democracy. America not only has credit with China for its unstinting support of Beijing's policy; as leader of the non-Communist world, it is sitting on the diplomatic equivalent of a pot of gold. Vietnam is expecting a reward for peace: the promise of aid and development money that can come only from Japan, Europe, and the United States. The United States should use this leverage now to support the non-Communist Cambodians during the peace process.

This year Prince Sihanouk laid the foundation upon which the United States can build. Living up to his reputation as a diplomatic wizard, the prince met as a private citizen with his adversary Hun Sen, the Cambodian prime minister installed by Vietnam. The two men agreed that a free and independent Cambodia required democratic elections, a complete Vietnamese troop withdrawal, the elimination of a threat by the Khmer Rouge, and international supervision to make sure everyone held to their promises.

Sihanouk risked losing the patronage of his long-standing ally, China, by publicly divorcing the Khmer Rouge and, in an interview with me, warning the world of a "new holocaust" for Cambodia if the Chinese, the Thais, and the West do not change their strategy toward Pol Pot. His ploy worked. The various parties made the non-return to power of the Khmer Rouge an essential part of any peace pact. Sihanouk's success was crowned in early December with the public announcement by China that it would cut off aid to the Khmer Rouge as the Vietnamese withdraw their troops if they do so according to a fixed schedule and under international supervision.

Sihanouk and Hun Sen still disagree over how to handle the Khmer Rouge army. Sihanouk wants to include a diminished Khmer Rouge army in a national army of reconciliation and thereafter seduce the Khmer Rouge soldiers with democracy, believing they will happily abandon their terrorist leaders once given the opportunity. Hun Sen would rather see the entire army left in their jungle redoubt and deal with the question after elections. Both men say the top Khmer Rouge leaders have no further role in the country's government or army.

The first response by the United States has been to beef up Sihanouk's army with more non-lethal aid and covert weapons supplies. Unfortunately, it's a little late in the day to create a viable third force army. The United States passed up that opportunity ten years ago when it persuaded and coerced the non-Communists to form a coalition with the Khmer Rouge. It could better strengthen Sihanouk's hand by persuading its friend China to negotiate directly with Vietnam. Only these two powers can ensure that the Khmer Rouge threat is dealt with seriously.

Then the United States can anticipate the next crisis. Hun Sen's strength is his control of Cambodia. What if he is tempted to stonewall negotiations once it becomes clear that Vietnam is withdrawing and that the Khmer Rouge threat has been blunted? Sihanouk might then be tempted to fall back on the Khmer Rouge as a threat to force Hun Sen to make the final necessary compromises.

The United States could avert such maneuvers by convincing Vietnam to force its Cambodian client to cooperate with a lasting peace proposal. At the same time, the United States should elicit a promise from all the powers involved that no one will ever again use the Khmer Rouge army as blackmail.

By taking these steps, the new Bush administration could move a few mountains of its own, not only ensuring Vietnam's withdrawal but putting to rest the fear that it could happen again in Cambodia.

ELIZABETH BECKER

Elizabeth Becker is the author of *When the War Was Over* (Simon and Schuster), a history of the Cambodian revolution and holocaust period.

The Forest Disservice.

TIMBER!

LONG-TIME conservationists are skeptical, to say the least, about George Bush's election-year conversion to their cause. In a way, though, Bush's real intentions are beside the point, because in this area, as in others, the bureaucracy tends to run on its own fuel. The U.S. Forest Service, for example, consistently defies its legislative mandate to manage tree-cutting responsibly in national forests. Year after year, regardless of which party controls the White House, the Forest Service runs its timber program with virtual indifference to the environmental consequences.

And that's not the half of it. If the Forest Service were reaping huge profits, then its defenders could argue that economic considerations sometimes outweigh high-minded concerns about endangered species and erosion. But in fact the government often sells the wood at a loss, sometimes an immense one; it actually pays money to degrade the environment. It is a telling fact that this agency consistently draws fire both from liberal environmental groups and from the conservative National Taxpayers Union.

Between 1982 and 1987, the Forest Service's timber cutting losses totaled $2.4 billion, according to congressional testimony by Barry R. Flamm, a former supervisor of the Shoshone National Forest in Wyoming who is now chief forester of the Wilderness Society. Timber sales from the Tongass National Forest in Southeast Alaska, for example, have lost from 91 to 99 cents on the dollar during the 1980s. In spite of a severely depressed timber market in

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the region, Forest Service engineers built roads and well-appointed logging camps in the wilderness, to the tune of at least $40 million a year, to provide timber that no one was very interested in buying. The agency started out asking $1,000 per thousand board-feet of cedar. But the Louisiana-Pacific Corporation and Japan's Alaska Pulp Corporation—Tongass's exclusive customers by 50-year contract—insisted they couldn't pay that much. The price finally settled on was $1.22. Similarly, spruce went from an asking price of $215 to $2.25. In short, the free market had decided that cutting timber in this part of the country wasn't worth the trouble, but the government nonetheless continued to subsidize the activity as necessary.

The Forest Service has yawned at warnings by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game that this program jeopardizes one of the few untouched ecosystems left on earth. Road-building and logging threaten grizzly bears, Sitka deer, salmon, bald eagles, and other wildlife, not to mention an isolated lifestyle many Alaskans have chosen deliberately. And, to put the matter in terms that will appeal to bottom-liners, the timber program also poses dangers to a $400 million-a-year commercial fishing industry and a booming tourism business that depends on proximity to a pristine wilderness.

IN EXPLAINING why the Forest Service pays money to disrupt the environment, officials often cite its lifelong friendship with timber-dependent communities. Some 90 years ago the Forest Service began to invite mills to set up shop near the national forests, and whole towns grew up. To this day, planners base their management decisions predominantly on a sense of obligation to locals. "The national interests are considered in planning, but the key importance is on the local communities and people," says John White, assistant director for land management planning in the Forest Service.

Such thinking ignores the rest of the American people, each of whom owns an equal share in the national forests. The law mandates that the Forest Service preserve endangered species habitats, water quality, and backcountry recreation areas; nowhere does it require the agency to look out for local economic interests. Nor is there any good reason why the agency *should* subsidize locals, any more than it should subsidize any other special interest group. Yet the agency routinely employs a computer model that predicts how each land-use scheme affects jobs near the forest in question.

Forest Service defenders point also to several other purported spillover benefits of selling timber at below-market prices. For instance, cutting timber, which typically requires extensive road-building, reduces the cost of opening up new areas for recreation, and creates panoramic views and new picnic areas. But some economists argue that the agency's forest management plans systematically exaggerate the public demand for logging's side effects (by assuming, for example, an absurdly heavy demand for picnicking in "clear-cuts" areas). Meanwhile, although the Forest Service's own data show a strong and growing demand for roadless recreation, the timber program dictates that the road network grow by half in the next 40 years.

The Forest Service claims that logging can "enhance" wildlife. Clear-cuts create forest "edges," which bring together different types of habitats and spur the growth of shrubs for grazing animals. What the Forest Service fails to factor into the equation is that clear-cuts attract animals that live in areas disturbed by civilization (deer, raccoon, blue jays) and displace animals that require primitive space remote from man (bear, elk). In other words, the more fragile the species, the more harshly the Forest Service treats it.

THE FOREST SERVICE'S original purpose was to supply the nation with lumber from national forests. So it's not surprising that the agency's employees traditionally have moved up the ladder by scoring board-feet. This emphasis was supposed to shift after 1976, when Congress passed the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), which ordered the agency to stop giving priority to timber and, instead, to manage the land for all uses, with special attention to conservation. But there appears to have been no lasting transformation of the agency's sense of purpose. Quite the contrary: in fiscal year 1989, the Forest Service requested increased funding for timber sales of nearly $26.5 million, and reductions of nearly $19 million in programs such as trail maintenance, reforestation, recreation, and habitat management.

In a letter to the Senate interior appropriations subcommittee, 33 senators protested that this budget request, like those in the past, shortchanged recreation and wildlife in favor of timber. To be fair, though, Congress shares blame for the agency's timber bent. Using budget appropriations and other gadgetry, legislators support woodcutting that provides jobs for their constituents.

Further polluting the ideals of NFMA is a 1906 "payments to counties" law, which entitles all counties with national forest land to 25 percent of the proceeds from timber harvests. The payments, earmarked for road and school budgets, come from gross receipts; whether the Forest Service ultimately lost money on the timber has nothing to do with it. So congressmen and local officials have a mighty incentive to push for a high harvest, whatever the cost.

Perhaps the Forest Service's odd tendency to sell timber at a financial loss could, in principle, be defended. The losses could be seen as public payments (that is, taxpayers' payments) to the lumber industry to ensure that wood is harvested in an environmentally responsible way. The trouble with this rationale, as we've seen, is that the agency pays only passing attention, at best, to the environmental consequences of its actions. It is true that the service's clear-cuts are smaller and less disruptive than clear-cuts on private land often are. And its clear-cuts have a rounder, more natural looking shape, for what that's worth. But the service also sells timber from steep slopes, risking erosion of the sort that may yet damage Alaskan fisheries. And the agency steadily infiltrates the forests with roads even

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when they threaten fast-disappearing species, such as the northern spotted owl.

One way the Forest Service has fended off criticism is with creative accounting. It claims, for example, that on balance it made money in fiscal year 1987. But this claim depends on amortizing logging roads over 60 to 150 years, when they're expected to last only 20. In any event, the Forest Service concedes that it loses money in at least half of its forests.

The Forest Service describes its mission with lilting phraseology like "balanced use," "wise use," and "multiple use" and professes to seek "the greatest good for the greatest number for all time." In plain English, that means providing timber to the country at virtually any cost.

KAREN FRANKLIN

Karen Franklin is a free-lance writer in Washington, D.C.

Robert Bork they ain't.

THE 80-PERCENTERS

GEORGE BUSH has said he will nominate to the Supreme Court "moderate" persons with "conservative views." That Bushism is hard to unpack, but presumably it means no more Borks. Actually, there are no more Borks around. That is, there's no one of his professional stature whose legal theories, if adopted, could so substantially change the direction of the Supreme Court.

When federal appeals court Judge Anthony Kennedy was nominated after the Bork rejection (and the Ginsburg withdrawal), some conservatives groused that Kennedy was an "80-percenter"—he would vote about 80 percent of the time the way Bork would have. Whether that's true or not, Kennedy is the prototype for Bush Supreme Court nominees—unmenacing but clearly conservative. The problem for liberals is that Bush has plenty of "80-percenters" left to choose from.

Chances are that he'll be able to appoint several of them. The three oldest justices—William Brennan, Harry Blackmun, and Thurgood Marshall—are 80 or older, and they're also the three most often left of center. And Court watchers believe Justice Byron White, whom conservatives regard as a mixed commodity (good on civil rights, bad on separation of powers), may soon retire.

The front-runner among the 80-percenters is Attorney General Richard Thornburgh (whose prospects for the Court would have been nil had Bush not retained him in the Cabinet). Thornburgh, 56, has served as a U.S. Attorney (under President Nixon) and as an assistant attorney general in charge of the Criminal Division (under President Ford). Come January 20 he will become one of the few Republicans to have served every Republican president since Nixon.

As Reagan's third attorney general, Thornburgh has pleased conservatives. In August, when it was revealed that he had once been an ACLU member, Thornburgh issued a statement making clear his rejection of the organization, which he said had a "political agenda." In October Thornburgh personally argued before the Supreme Court in defense of government drug testing. And last month he told the Court that it has an opportunity to reconsider *Roe* v. *Wade*, the 1973 decision establishing a woman's right to an abortion. Thornburgh had indicated his opposition to *Roe* during his confirmation hearings, and has worked hard since then to pave the way for a reversal of the ruling.

The new attorney general, though, has yet to win his conservative spurs on the question of executive power. Conservatives generally oppose judicial creation of rights not found in the Constitution, arguing that courts should defer to legislatures. But many conservatives also believe that Congress has enlarged its power at the expense of the executive, and that courts should halt this trend. The *Wall Street Journal*, among others, has criticized Thornburgh for an insufficient appreciation of executive power. But Bush discussed this matter with the attorney general and was satisfied enough to keep him on. How well Thornburgh protects executive power will have great bearing on a Bush decision to tap him for the Court.

The personal question for Thornburgh is whether, as one Reagan official puts it, he really wants to go to those "lonely marbled halls." A two-term governor, he's the most politically aware attorney general in modern times and, with the possible exception of Robert Kennedy, the most politically ambitious since Robert Jackson, who served under Franklin Roosevelt. Inasmuch as a judge should respond to reason, not passion, someone as political as Thornburgh may not be suitable for donning the black robes. In fact, it will be interesting to see whether the attorney general moves leftward in response to political pressure from liberal lobbies.

Thornburgh is for nomination purposes the equivalent of a snow tire, someone to be nominated when the rough confirmation weather hits—in, for example, the final year of an administration. But there are plenty of fair-weather nominees. What follows is a brief glance at moderate, i.e., unthreatening, candidates, "80-percenters" who would cast conservative votes much of the time:

Patrick E. Higganbotham, 50. Justice Lewis Powell was the last Southerner on the Court when he retired; his replacement, Kennedy, is a Californian. There is pent-up demand for a Southerner, and when the first vacancy occurs, the Texan Bush may demand one as well. The name mentioned first among possible Southerners is Higganbotham, who lives in Dallas and is a Reagan judge (appointed in 1982 to the Fifth Circuit). A native of Alabama and a graduate of Alabama Law School, Higganbotham also was a Ford judge, going to the district court in 1975. He could raise the eyebrows of some right-to-life activists: he wrote an opinion striking down a Louisiana law requiring the

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attending physician to inform a woman, within 24 hours of an abortion, of the various alternative means available for disposing of "fetal remains." But Higganbotham clearly is a conservative judge; his opinion in the "fetus disposal" case noted that the Supreme Court's abortion jurisprudence is "problematic" and "swirling in uncertainty." Moreover, his confirmation wouldn't be a problem. After voting against Bork, Senators Dennis DeConcini and Lloyd Bentsen both said they'd support Higganbotham.

THREE LONG SHOTS for a "Southern" seat are North Carolinian C. Boyden Grey, whom Bush has designated as his counselor, Virginian James Harvie Wilkinson III, whom Reagan appointed to the Fourth Circuit in 1983, and another Fifth Circuit Reagan judge, Edith H. Jones.

Grey, 45, is a graduate of Harvard and the University of North Carolina Law School, and was a partner with Wilmer, Cutler, and Pickering prior to becoming Bush's legal counsel in 1981. A former Democrat, he clerked for Chief Justice Earl Warren. Wilkinson, 44, is a graduate of Yale and Virginia Law School, and clerked for Justice Powell. He taught law at Virginia and ran the editorial pages of the *Virginia-Pilot* from 1978 to 1981. He had a tough confirmation process in 1983, largely because of his relatively brief career in the law. But no one doubts his intellect or technical ability, and as a judge he has few detractors. Jones, 39, went to Cornell and then Texas Law School, and was a partner in James Baker's law firm, a connection that could help. She has a reputation as a tough-minded, law-and-order judge. Bush may reckon Grey, Wilkinson, and Jones too young for the Court right now. But any one of the three could make short lists late in the first term, and all three probably would in a second.

Ralph K. Winter, 53. Yale University, Yale Law, Yale law professor. Could "Poppy" Bush ask for anything more? Winter is the judge (Reagan put him on the Second Circuit) who dissented in the Baby Jane Doe case, siding with the government's view that in order to determine whether a handicapped infant has been discriminated against, it can have access to the baby's medical records. Bush is also likely to be attracted to Winter's views on separation of powers. In *Buckley* v. *Valeo*, Winter successfully argued before the Supreme Court that officers of the United States must be appointed by the president, not Congress. Winter didn't take the bar until the mid-1970s, in order to argue *Buckley*, but he has overcome lack of trial experience by doing something unusual for a judge at his level: sitting as a district judge during the summertime. Winter also has two other things going for him. First, he's a good friend of Justice Marshall. If Marshall's seat becomes vacant, Winter—who was the first person ever to clerk for Marshall (when he was on the Second Circuit)—is likely to receive Marshall's public support, ideology notwithstanding. Second, Winter comes from New England, now justice-less and the next region after the South in which Bush of Texas-Maine is most likely to fish for a nominee.

David H. Souter, 49. Harvard College, Magdalen College, Oxford (a Rhodes scholar), Harvard Law School. Bright, professionally accomplished, and conservative, Souter is bound to make any short list. He has White House connections in the person of chief of staff John Sununu, who appointed him to the New Hampshire Supreme Court in 1983. Before that he was a superior court judge, and before that New Hampshire's attorney general. Souter also has powerful friends in the Senate such as Warren Rudman. And, like Winter, he has the New England advantage.

Ferdinand F. Fernandez, 51. Reagan appointed Fernandez, who has law degrees from the University of Southern California and Harvard, to a California district court seat in 1985. Bush might elevate him to the Ninth Circuit (Reagan tried, but the nomination was one of those that got lost in election year politics) before considering him for the Supreme Court. Justice Department officials think highly of Fernandez, whose legal career includes a state court judgeship and private practice as a tax and administrative law specialist. For those who care about such things, and Bush just might, Fernandez would be the first justice of his ethnic background. Because his ancestors are from Spain, some Hispanic activists might not consider him their own. But they wouldn't oppose someone with his last name.

William D. Hutchinson, 56, and Anthony J. Scirica, 48. Because Thornburgh knows both of these Pennsylvanians, they could make the lists. Hutchinson, a Harvard law graduate, went to the Third Circuit in 1988 after serving since 1981 as a Pennsylvania Supreme Court justice. His record, like Thornburgh's, is that of a public servant; he spent almost a decade in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and has been a state prosecutor and counsel to a school board. Reagan appointed Scirica, a Michigan law graduate, to the district court in 1984 and to the Third Circuit earlier this year. He, too, has served as a state judge. One administration official assesses Scirica as maybe an "85-percenter."

UNLIKE SOME of his predecessors (especially Truman and LBJ), Bush isn't likely to appoint any of his cronies to the Court. He has few lawyers in his inner circle. (The most prominent are Grey and James Baker, whose ambitions so far don't include the Court.) Bush has the chance to expand the pool of Supreme Court candidates by making judicious executive branch appointments early in his tenure. Justice White was a deputy attorney general, Justice Marshall was a solicitor general, and Justices Rehnquist and Scalia were assistant attorneys general in charge of the Office of Legal Counsel. One way for Bush to prepare for the jurisprudential future would be to pick as his solicitor general someone like Frank Easterbrook, 40, a former deputy solicitor general whom Reagan appointed to the Seventh Circuit in 1985. If someday Bush nominated Easterbrook to the Court, you'd have at least a 90-percenter, according to those who know him, maybe a 99 or even more.

TERRY EASTLAND

Terry Eastland is a resident scholar at the National Legal Center for the Public Interest in Washington.

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Inside Washington's rumor mill.

PSSST

BY MARK HOSENBALL AND MICHAEL ISIKOFF

NO SOONER was former Texas Senator John Tower poised to assume stewardship of the nation's defenses a few weeks ago than whispers and snickers began floating around the Washington cocktail circuit. Most of the talk revolved around the record of Tower's second divorce. Specifically, lawyers for his second wife had asked him to itemize his meetings with "Darla, a former member of your household staff in Geneva." "TOWER FACING SEX SCANDAL," screamed the headline in the *New York Post*, somewhat stretching the available facts.

Details of Tower's relationship with Darla are missing from the court record. In any case, they are probably irrelevant to his ability to run the Pentagon. But no matter. The gossip, along with other developments, apparently caused President-elect George Bush to have second thoughts about the former senator's nomination.

Tower's travail is merely the latest example of a noteworthy phenomenon: the expanding role that salacious rumors and gossip—once believed the province of British tabloids and Italian glossies—are playing in American political discourse. For the past 18 months—ever since the moment the *National Enquirer* unearthed spectacular color photographs of Gary Hart aboard the *Monkey Business* and Donna Rice aboard Gary Hart—some of the nation's highest-paid political operatives and journalists have been industriously investigating the private lives of public figures.

Most of these inquiries reached dead ends or turned out to be unpublishable as "news stories." But they still achieved wide circulation and in some cases helped to shape the 1988 campaign. Like the society gossip described by Don Basilio, the malevolent music teacher in *The Barber of Seville*, the modern political rumor starts as "a little breeze, a very gentle zephyr . . . it goes spreading, it goes buzzing; it penetrates insidiously," until finally "it overflows and breaks loose" and "produces an explosion like the shot of a cannon, an earthquake, a hurricane."

Yet if today's politicians have become the victims of rumor-mongers, they bear a large part of the blame. The "issues" promoted by the candidates of 1988—Willie Horton and patriotism from the Republican side, conspiracies involving Ollie North and Noriega from the Democrats—seemed designed to appeal to a passion for dirt rather than to rational thought. What follows is a brief tutorial on how the gossip of 1988 buzzed and swept through the political pageant. We have chosen to catalog and dissect some of these rumors not, as some might suspect, to titillate and entertain, but to illuminate an ominous trend in our political life.

George Bush and the Washington Mistress. This was the Big Enchilada, the rumor that many political operatives devoutly believed could stop the Bush juggernaut. For much of September and October, after Bush soared to a seemingly insurmountable lead, Dukakis staffers berated reporters, demanding to know why the story was being suppressed. In fact, stories about Bush's supposed affair with a longtime staff member had been around since the early days of the Reagan presidency.

It didn't matter that Bush's alleged extracurriculars were undocumented. The *LA Weekly*, an "alternative" left-wing giveaway, ran a front-page "scoop" on October 14 headlined "GEORGE BUSH, LOVERBOY." True to form, two British tabloids, the *Evening Standard* and *Today*, took the bait and bannered the supposed scandal on their front pages. That was enough for the *New York Daily News*, the country's largest metropolitan daily. Unable to prove the story itself, it ran a wire service version of the Fleet Street rip-off of the *LA Weekly*. The author of the *Weekly* story, a self-described private detective named Richard Ryan, admitted to the *National Enquirer* that his sources were a journalist and a film director. "But, [when] you add their rumors to all the other rumors, you know it's worth writing—even if their statements don't prove anything," Ryan added. "Anyway, all you have to do is look at a picture of Barbara and you know he would cheat on her."

One might think that such a confession from the rumor's chief propagator would have settled things. Yet on October 19 the stock market plunged 43 points on rumors that the *Washington Post* was finally about to unload the inside dirt. It didn't; the *Post* story never existed, but the *Post* and papers across the country were forced to explain to their readers why their investments were suffering. Dan Rather even alluded to rumors about Bush's "personal life" on that evening's broadcast. The next day an anguished Donna Brazile, a Dukakis staffer, blurted out to a roomful of reporters: "I think George Bush owes it to the American people to fess up. The American people have every right to know if Barbara Bush will share that bed with him in the White House."

Brazile was immediately fired, giving the "responsible" media the opportunity to be even more explicit. By the final days of the campaign, the unsubstantiated story had

Mark Hosenball is a reporter in the Washington bureau of the London *Sunday Times*. Michael Isikoff is a reporter for the *Washington Post*.

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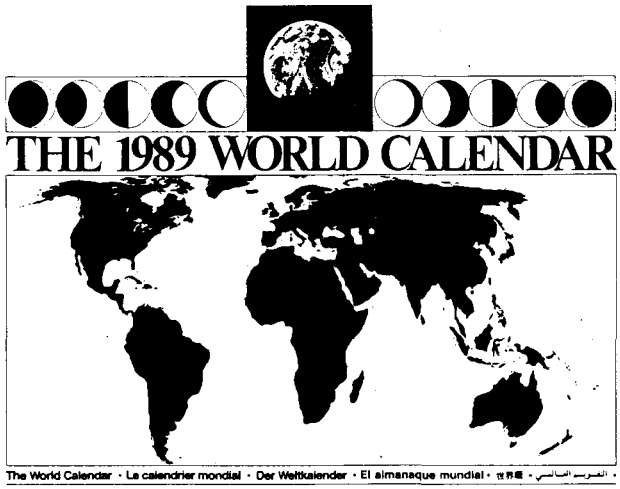
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received such exposure that Bush was being trailed by hecklers chanting the name of his alleged paramour.

Dukakis and the Shrink. In the weeks after his nomination, probably nothing hurt Dukakis more than insinuations about his mental health. Their basis was little more than the fact that, like virtually every other American, Dukakis had suffered personal tragedies—tragedies that might lead one to suffer serious depression. His older brother, who died in a hit-and-run accident, had a history of mental illness and once attempted suicide. And Governor Dukakis had been crushed when, running for re-election in 1978, he was defeated by a right-wing challenger in the Democratic primary. Using their unique powers of logic, supporters of Lyndon LaRouche concluded in one leaflet that "there is strong evidence that Michael Dukakis suffers from a deep-seated mental instability that could paralyze him and decapitate our government."

The fevered speculations of LaRouche and his claque are normally considered too loony by even the most scandal-hungry journalists. But in this case, they prompted some reporters to ask why Dukakis had not released his medical records. This led in turn to a front-page story in the Rev. Sun Myung Moon's *Washington Times*. (All through this period, it should be added, there were rumors that Bush campaign manager Lee Atwater was helping to circulate the Dukakis rumors, though Atwater firmly denied the charge.) A reporter for a LaRouche publication called "Executive Intelligence Review" asked President Reagan about the matter at a press conference. "I'm not going to pick on an invalid," the president joked, moving the Dukakis mental health story onto the evening news.

NOBODY HAD the slightest evidence of any mental dysfunction on Dukakis's part. But the *Washington Times* kept the story alive by getting Janet Peters, Dukakis's sister-in-law, to speculate on whether the Massachusetts governor had ever consulted a psychiatrist. "Its possible but I doubt it," she told the *Times*. The *Times* interpreted this expansively: "DUKAKIS KIN HINTS AT SESSIONS," blared its front-page headline. Wesley Pruden, the *Times* managing editor, used his own chronically bizarre column to speculate on rumors ranging "from the unexceptional (high blood pressure, an enlarged prostate) to the disturbing (extraordinary measures; taken to combat severe clinical depression) to the ridiculously and wickedly absurd (virulent and chronic venereal infection)."

Dukakis's doctors eventually came forward and firmly denied that he had ever been treated for mental illness. By then the rumors had achieved such momentum that when a noted political columnist wisecracked at the Republican convention that Dukakis was really hiding the fact that he had had a vasectomy, that in turn became a hot rumor among journalists on the campaign plane—even if it never reached the front pages.

The Quayle Rumors. From the moment Dan Quayle was plucked from obscurity to become George Bush's running mate, he became a pincushion for rumors. Quayle helped set himself up for such treatment by seeming to apologize, at his first press conference with Bush, for his service in the National Guard. His equivocations touched off the "feeding frenzy" of investigations into his past, particularly his undistinguished academic and congressional records. One hot rumor gleefully retailed by Democratic sources was that Quayle committed plagiarism while an undergraduate at DePauw University. Scores of reporters chased after this one, finally tracking down Mark Lawrence, a former DePauw professor who was alleged to have caught young Danforth in the act.

But it turned out that neither Lawrence nor any other former Quayle teachers grilled by the nation's top investigative reporters could produce evidence of dishonesty. Nonetheless, the unsubstantiated charge of plagiarism—a fashionable allegation ever since the Joe Biden scandal—found its way into the columns of no less than the *Wall Street Journal*, labeled as a "rumor" that was plaguing Quayle's campaign.

The most titillating Quayle rumor didn't surface until weeks later, when reporters began getting calls from a man who called himself "The Owl." The Owl claimed to have information linking Quayle to a ring of southern Indiana cocaine dealers who had been busted six years earlier. Even though details in his story changed from phone call to phone call and no supporting evidence ever surfaced, rumors that somebody was about to break a knockout story linking Quayle to drugs were rampant in the nation's newsrooms during the final weeks of the campaign.

Enter Brett Kimberlin, a.k.a. the "Speedway Bomber." With less than a fortnight to go before Election Day, Kimberlin, a former drug trafficker who earned his nickname by planting bombs near the Indianapolis Speedway, began placing collect phone calls to reporters from his current residence at the federal penitentiary in El Reno, Oklahoma. He offered an intriguing tale. He claimed he first met Quayle at an Indiana University pot party in 1971, and that over the next year and a half Quayle came to an Indianapolis Burger Chef once a month to buy Mexican pot for $25 to $50 an ounce. Kimberlin said he even gave Quayle an ounce of Afghan hashish as a wedding present in 1972 after Quayle showed him a picture of his fiancée, Marilyn.

ONE REPORTER who, at least initially, showed interest in Kimberlin's tale was Nina Totenberg, the National Public Radio reporter who broke the story about Supreme Court nominee Douglas Ginsburg's not-so-youthful experimentation with marijuana. On October 28 Totenberg presented the Bush campaign with sworn affidavits from Kimberlin—whose crimes also include a conviction for perjury—and demanded a response. Kimberlin then invited a crew from NBC in to tape his allegations, prompting the local newspaper, the *El Reno Tribune*, to publish a story informing its readers that a national TV network was in town to interview Dan Quayle's self-alleged drug dealer. When reporters noted that there were no witnesses to back Kimberlin up, he replied that he had told the

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story years ago to some of his cellmates. They would corroborate it, he said. Like who? he was asked. The one name he offered turned out to be another impeccable source: James Lewis of Chicago, alias the Tylenol Extortionist.

In the end, while most of the national media chose to ignore Kimberlin's allegations, the story about Quayle's drug use still gained considerable currency among the political cognoscenti. It also managed to make it into *In These Times*, the socialist biweekly, and onto a few broadcast outlets, including WBAI radio in New York. *In These Times* even managed to put a paranoid cast on the decision by other papers to ignore the story. "So why weren't their findings reported?" the newspaper's media columnist demanded to know.

Dick Darman, wild and crazy guy.

WHITE HOUSE WONK

BY FRED BARNES

IN JULY 1984 George Bush visited Ronald Reagan at his ranch in Santa Barbara. The issue on their minds was how to respond to Walter Mondale's assertion that he would raise taxes if elected to the White House and so would Reagan. The Reagan position was: no, I won't. But Bush proved clumsy in echoing it. He met with reporters in Santa Barbara, voiced general opposition to a tax increase, but left open the possibility that the Reagan administration might, in a pinch, agree to one. Several days later Bush was zinged in a newspaper column by Rowland Evans and Robert Novak for making the Reagan response to Mondale muddy and weak.

Bush blamed Richard Darman, then deputy chief of staff in the White House, for inspiring the attack. He was so furious that he summoned Darman for a private face-off in his office. Darman pleaded innocence. The meeting was tense, but Bush wasn't overly accusatory. Still, he wasn't persuaded by Darman either. It took the personal intervention of James Baker, the White House chief of staff at the time and Bush's longtime friend, to convince him that Darman wasn't the leaker. And Bush continued to regard Darman, who can be brusque and intellectually haughty, about as fondly as he does Bob Dole today. Darman, in short, wasn't Bush's type.

A less resourceful and intensely ambitious fellow would have abandoned any hope of winning over Bush. Not Darman. For two years allies of Darman such as Baker, pollster Robert Teeter, and Bush aide Craig Fuller quietly lobbied Bush. He gradually softened. In 1986 Bush began receiving memos and suggestions from Darman. Finally, when Bush and his top political and policy advisers gathered last Memorial Day weekend at Kennebunkport, Maine, for a campaign strategy session, Darman was invited. Not only that, but he impressed both Bush and his wife, Barbara, with his advice.

Later, once debates were scheduled in the fall campaign, Darman was called on to play Michael Dukakis in practice sessions. "He was the logical guy," says Teeter. An issues junkie, Darman quickly mastered Dukakis's positions and even imitated his syntax and speaking style. Darman showed up at the last practice wearing a tank helmet. Bush was charmed. When he started picking members of his Cabinet, he quickly tapped Darman for exactly the job Darman craved, budget director. No one else was seriously considered.

I've dwelt on Darman's doghouse-to-Cabinet story because it suggests how he will go about his job in the Office of Management and Budget. He's smarter, more energetic, politically shrewder,* more experienced in Washington, and more knowledgeable on almost every issue than anyone else in Bush's orbit. He'll be tough to hold back. The OMB director's job of monitoring spending, reviewing regulations, and advising the president is important by itself. Darman will take it to new heights. He's not a fixture in Bush's inner circle—Secretary of State-designate Baker, Teeter, Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady, and John Sununu, the new White House chief—but he soon will be. His issue, the deficit, is Bush's top priority, and he's bound to make the most of that. It shouldn't take Darman long to establish himself as Bush's most influential adviser, except on foreign policy, which is the bailiwick of Darman's mentor, Baker.

In fact, Darman will shape Bush's domestic agenda more than Baker his foreign. The reason is simple, though it didn't occur to me until a senior Bush aide clued me in. Bush's primary interest is in foreign affairs. He has strong views on the subject. But on domestic affairs, he's a neophyte. His knowledge is skimpy, his views less formed. So Darman will be molding soft clay, Baker hard rock. Darman will also have the upper hand in confronting Cabinet members on spending. Having worked in six agencies (Treasury, Justice, State, the Pentagon, Commerce, and the old Health and Welfare) and the White House, he'll know more about their programs than they will. He's different

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from David Stockman, Reagan's first budget boss. He's not anti-government, especially when it comes to safety net spending. But he is task-oriented. If the task is to cut without mercy, he'll find a way.

IN REAGAN'S Washington, Darman, 45, is a square peg in a round hole. The Reagan style is laid-back. Darman is intense, insecure, and thin-skinned. (Bush is somewhere in between Reagan and Darman.) He is also a workaholic. For him government is an end, not a steppingstone to a high-paying corporate job. He's got old money. He grew up in Massachusetts, where his family owned textile mills, and went on to Harvard and Harvard Business School.

Darman's ego is large, his tolerance for criticism small. At the White House, he always found a way to let people know he'd gotten 800 on his math SAT. (Sununu, it turns out, did too, and also passed the test for membership in Mega, the group of supersmart Mensa nerds. When Darman heard this, he looked over a copy of the test he'd obtained five years earlier, but he hasn't taken it yet.) Darman is legendary for retaliating against reporters whose stories about him are even partially unflattering. In 1984 a *Newsweek* piece included a laudatory quote from Michael Deaver, followed by another from an unnamed official calling Darman "a royal pain in the ass." When Darman came to thank Deaver, Deaver said he'd uttered the other quote as well. Darman took his anger out on *Newsweek*, cutting off the magazine for months on the ground that since he's not a pain in the ass, the quote shouldn't have been used.

In the hedonistic 1980s, Darman remains something of a puritan. He doesn't smoke or drink, and never has. He rarely socializes. He, his wife, Kathleen, and their two sons (ages 12 and 8) live on a five-acre lot along the Potomac River in McLean, Virginia, but few in the Reagan crowd have been invited there. Kathleen, who has a doctorate in English literature, is no fan of Reagan, his policies, or his California mores—or, for that matter, of politicos in general, whom she considers self-important, hypocritical, and ultimately not all that consequential. She sifts through hundreds of invitations the Darmans receive, but accepts practically none. She went to a state dinner for Anwar Sadat, a lunch for the Irish prime minister, and a dinner for scholars of the presidency. That's about it. She's recently finished a book about American expatriates in Europe after World War II who found that the real cultural action was back in the United States.

Darman's puritanism crops up in his increasingly frequent denunciations of America's popular culture. "The work ethic is now rivaled by the leisure ethic," he wrote in 1987. "It sometimes seems as if the rising stars of our commercial culture think Americans fought and died to make the world safe for wine coolers, the BMW, a year-end bonus, and designer underwear." He thinks Americans consume too much, invest too little, and have lost their pioneering spirit. He's trashed corporate leaders as lazy and inefficient, and the education system as failing at "intellectual capital development." Once he makes headway on the deficit, Darman wants to start crusading on these themes.

His puritanism does not make him a political conservative. True, he's warmed to some conservative positions, but he's still a pragmatist, a compromiser, at heart. His approach to any problem is to figure out what's feasible, then get what you can. One conservative who's dealt with Darman quotes him as saying, "In theory you're right, but it's not in the real world. Show me something that will sell in today's environment."

Darman has a strategy for everything. He told the *New York Times* that before going to sleep he jots notes about some troublesome issue on a pad on his bedside table. He wants to be ready to scribble down any ideas he may have when he awakens. "I may be crazy, but I think I get a lot of work done while sleeping," he said. Darman had the best strategy I heard for pulling Reagan out of his Iranamok doldrums. It was an elaborate plan to create the aura of a third Reagan term by overhauling his Cabinet and promoting new policies. Darman was at Treasury at the time, and the White House wouldn't listen. He was the architect of the circuitous strategy that produced tax reform in 1986 (it involved abandoning House Republicans at one point and backing a Democratic bill). Howard Baker once used the adjective "Darmanesque" to describe a scheme that was a bit too clever.

DARMAN IS A gifted aggrandizer. He had no connection with Reagan in 1980, but after the campaign he offered Baker, whom he'd known years earlier at the Commerce Department, a system for handling the paper flow to the president. Baker hired him as staff secretary. He quickly went beyond paper-pushing to become Baker's idea man and a force in economic and domestic policy. His opposition to a contingency tax increase in 1983 prompted Reagan to abandon that idea in 1984. He crafted a major role for himself in Reagan's re-election effort, infuriating campaign manager Ed Rollins and speechwriter Ken Khachigian. He prepared Reagan for his debates with Mondale. And so on.

The point is, don't underestimate Darman. He's relentless. With Brady already stumbling badly as treasury secretary, Darman should have an easy time emerging as unofficial economic czar. Brady responded lamely when economist Martin Feldstein, a sometime Bush adviser, called in November for letting the dollar fall, which it did. And Brady has gotten off on the wrong foot with the Japanese. After four years in the White House and two as deputy treasury secretary, Darman knows far more than Brady about economic policy-making. He's also closer to what Bush advocated in the campaign (no new taxes, a dab of re-regulation, a stable dollar). Brady's only hope is playing on his chumminess with Bush.

Darman has key allies in Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan and Vice Chairman Manuel Johnson. "In spite of all the articles that say how brilliant Darman is, the fact is he is brilliant," says Johnson. At the Fed, the chief worry now is the dollar, not inflation. The fear is that Brady won't be able to keep the dollar above 120 yen. That means

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the Fed would have to act, raising interest rates to hold up the dollar. But this might cause a recession, which would destroy Darman's hopes of significantly trimming the deficit. So Darman and Greenspan see eye-to-eye, and if Darman stakes out a role in monetary policy, he'll have strong backing at the Fed.

At the Pentagon, the new defense secretary won't get Darman to play Stockman to his Caspar Weinberger. Stockman was the boy wonder of spending cuts in 1981, but he ran into a brick wall in Weinberger. Defense spending soared until Congress restrained it in 1985. Darman supported Stockman's run at Weinberger and was chastened by the experience. Now he blames Stockman as much as Weinberger for gyrating defense spending (up for four years, down for four). Stockman mounted a frontal assault on Weinberger. Darman's plan is for a low-key maneuver, but only after he generates backing inside the administration for proposed cuts. The defense secretary will still squeal, but this time he'll probably lose.

The most intriguing relationship is Darman and Sununu. For now, they are a mutual admiration society. Sununu approached Darman before he'd been picked as White House chief of staff and said he wanted Darman as budget chief. That was good politics. The two are alike in one way—brains. But on domestic policy, they're sure to clash. Sununu is a hard-line conservative.

DARMAN'S VIEW on how to tackle the budget deficit has changed repeatedly. He favored the big tax increase passed in 1982, but now is committed to Bush's pledge of no new taxes. In April 1987, when he quit Treasury to join Shearson Lehman Hutton as an investment banker, he envisioned a grand compromise between the White House and Congress that included excise tax hikes, cuts in middle-class entitlements, and an agreement on a steady path for military spending. A year ago he predicted that the grand pact would be forged before Bush's first State of the Union address in early 1989. Then in the days before he was named budget director, he thought Bush could get away without issuing any budget document of his own in 1989. Bush—or rather, Darman—would just leap into negotiations with Congress.

All those strategies are out, and Darman for once doesn't have a set strategy. Since he was nominated on November 21 by Bush, Darman has spent his time clearing up his affairs with Shearson and courting members of Congress. He spent a full two weeks chatting with several dozen congressmen and senators, each for at least an hour. As best as one can make out from what he's told people, Darman is groping toward a strategy. It starts with the Reagan budget, which is due on January 9 and will outline domestic spending cuts of $25 billion or more and two percent growth in Pentagon spending. Bush won't endorse or repudiate the Reagan budget. Instead, he will spell out his own thoughts in a speech or a white paper, almost certainly calling for less in domestic cuts and for no growth or negative growth in military expenditures. Conservatives won't like the whack at the military. They'll have to be satisfied with Bush's steadfastness on taxes.

Once Bush goes on the record on spending, the negotiations are to begin. Some Democratic leaders have said they'll ignore Bush unless he issues his own budget. But Darman doesn't take this seriously. Besides, if Bush sent up a revised budget, Congress would just declare it DOA, Darman figures. No, should the new president call for talks, Congress will have to talk. Darman, for one, thinks chopping $30 billion out of the budget isn't that difficult, especially if some savings can be made in debt payments. (That, again, may pit him against Brady. A lower dollar would necessitate higher interest rates and screw up Darman's plans.) Darman would attack Medicare, farm subsidies, and the Pentagon. Having barred a tax increase, the Bush administration can get a compromise only by accepting deep Pentagon cuts. The alternative to such an agreement is Gramm-Rudman, which would itself slash about $15 billion from the Pentagon budget.

Gramm-Rudman, by the way, is one of many issues on which Darman has changed his mind in the 1980s. He saw it initially as a crude tool for restraining spending. Now he sees it as the only tool. Another such issue is taxes. Darman wasn't too keen on low tax rates at first, but then he joined the fight for tax reform. He wanted to get rid of unfair loopholes permanently, and he had discovered "a natural politico-economic law" that high tax rates "create a powerful incentive for the development of the deductions and shelters that undermine them." So low rates were the only cure. (But his anti-tax sentiments don't rule out a boost in the gasoline tax after 1989.) Darman discovered the importance of monetary policy and exchange rates only when he reached Treasury in 1985. Now he's for steady growth of the money supply and coordinated rates.

HAVING MASTERED economics, Darman now must pass another test. It's whether he can learn to court potential allies, schmooze folks he considers his intellectual inferiors (which means most of us), and read a mildly critical story about himself without going volcanic. Early in the Reagan administration, he alienated Nancy Reagan with some private comments about her lifestyle and values that wound up in print. And he sometimes cut off Reagan in midsentence. The Reagans shed no tears when he departed for Treasury. Darman didn't win many friends there either. At a gathering of former Treasury officials recently, one spoke highly of Darman. This drew catcalls and sharp objections.

For years Darman didn't have to worry about the social graces. Baker had the getting-along skills, and he had the smarts. It was a good cop/bad cop routine, and it worked. But now Darman is on his own, and he has a chance to be, if not another Alexander Hamilton, then at least the most powerful force in economic and domestic policy-making of his era. Darman tells friends he's learned from Baker's example and that the stories saying he's abrasive and arrogant are based on old information. In other words, there's a new Darman. We'll see. To prove it, he'll have to suffer certain fools gladly. The one to start with is George Bush. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Intrigues

Aristocrats are troublesome in a film. If the piece is going to work properly, they have somehow to cow us a bit, to make us feel a little inferior and jealous. One reliable way to handle the problem is to use English actors with upper-class accents—the Leslie Howard—C. Aubrey Smith route. But this method is tossed aside by the makers of *Dangerous Liaisons*. All the principal roles are cast with Americans, and not even for box-office pull—none of these actors is bankable. Whatever the reason, the actors sound (apart from what they actually say) like people we might know. Which is not quite the point of the enterprise.

Dangerous Liaisons
(Warner Bros.)

Nobody Listened
(Orbitel)

Dangerous Liaisons has a screenplay made by Christopher Hampton from his dramatization of Laclos's *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. The whole being of this 18th-century piece depends on our conviction that its sexual intrigues are the work of people condemned, by their exalted social station, to lives of self-indulgence and diversion, people who believe that the world was organized to put and keep them in their station. That conviction is missing here.

The member of the cast who does best, in this regard, is Mildred Natwick as old Rosemonde, aunt of the story's chief troublemaker, Valmont. Natwick has some sense of the arched spine and the role's own noblesse oblige to play a role. Swoosie Kurtz, as Volanges, the mother of the virgin whom Valmont seduces just because she's around when he's engaged on another seduction, is passable, mostly because she plays with a restraint that contrasts pleasantly with what for years was the brazen Swoosie Kurtz role.

Michelle Pfeiffer is, in a quasi-complimentary sense, pathetic. She is the faithful and religious wife Tourvel, whose seduction is Valmont's chief accomplishment in life. Pfeiffer does her utmost to portray the breeding of this woman, within which her very sincerity makes her prey to Valmont's wiles. But the result is pathetic because Pfeiffer, using everything she can summon, reaches only a drama-school approximation of the woman. As for sounding the depths of Tourvel's religious feeling, her desolation when she is betrayed, Pfeiffer is like a solo instrument trying bravely to render a symphonic passage.

Merteuil, Valmont's diabolic co-conspirator, is played by Glenn Close—intelligent, comprehending, acutely modulated. Close does particularly well with the long speeches in which she relates her resolution to get all possible satisfaction from her socially restricted position as a woman. And, after Natwick, Close comes nearest to credibility as a member of the class she says is hers.

The disaster is John Malkovich in the key role of Valmont, a man for whom inventive vice is the only palliative in a despised yet cherished life. Clearly a precursor of Sadean views, Valmont has two essential characteristics: he is aristocratic in his very chromosomes, and he is elegantly irresistible to women. Malkovich is neither.

From the moment he steps out of a carriage at the start, he walks and gestures like Malkovich. He has done nothing to bring himself to the part, not even bothering to learn how to pronounce "mademoiselle." ("Madam-uhzell," says M.) His voice winds like a tired snake through the eloquence that is supposed to be easily his; and his success with women suggests Popeye in Faulkner's *Sanctuary* more than a glittering 18th-century rake. He has some presence, but it is not Valmont's presence. Malkovich fights the picture from beginning to end.

Laclos's epistolary novel (1782) centers on the wager between Merteuil and Valmont on the latter's ability to seduce Tourvel; if he succeeds and brings written proof, then Merteuil, as she has done in the past, will bed him. These actions bring unforeseen consequences. (Reportedly another film of the book is en route.) Hampton's screenplay is better than his theater version. If some of the dialogue is curtailed, the flexibility of currents through intercutting helps tension and irony. Also Hampton makes cunning use of the richness that shooting in several châteaux affords.

The ending is better than the stage ending. In the theater, as Merteuil played cards after the destruction she has wreaked, the lights faded and the shadow of a guillotine appeared on the rear wall. This was a forced closing note for a work that is fundamentally religious, not political. The film ending doesn't go quite as far as the novel—Merteuil's eventual disfigurement by smallpox—but at least it lets her get booed when she enters her box at the opera. The very last shot is of Merteuil at her dressing table taking off her makeup; the very first shot was of her at that table about to be made up by servants. This framing gives the entire film the quality of a performance—under the eye of a taciturn but disapproving divinity.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Buster. The Great Bank Robbery of 1963. Yet another perfect-crime story but vitalized by unusual (factual) character traits. And by good acting. (Reviewed 12/19/88)

A Cry in the Dark. Another fact-crime story—this one a celebrated Australian murder case. Meryl Streep plays the mother of a murdered infant and *becomes* Australian, but is crimped by a screenplay that saw nothing in the story but the facts. (12/5/88)

Far North. Sam Shepard wrote and directed this funny, lively, disheveled attempt at a modern folk tale. Jessica Lange excels in this quasi-ballad that has a horse for a villain. (11/28/88)

Hotel Terminus. Klaus Barbie's life, especially after the Second World War, examined by Marcel Ophuls—at somewhat too great length but with grim revelations. (10/24/88)

SK

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Philippe Rousselot, the cinematographer who shot *Diva*, is equally overwhelming here. James Acheson, who did the costumes for *The Last Emperor*, uses a wonderfully subtle palette for costumes that might have been intrusively showy. Mick Audsley's editing keeps the film springy and alert, as in *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*. That film was directed by Stephen Freers, who directs here and who, except for the casting—with which he may have been saddled—again shows extraordinary gifts. I wish he had omitted the focus racking (changing focus in midshot from background to foreground or vice versa); otherwise, his camera and actor movement is perceptive, brisk, dynamic. Just one instance: Valmont is trying to persuade Tourvel of her redemptive effect on him. She walks quickly toward us down a garden path, getting away from him. The camera precedes her. Valmont follows, talking, moving from side to side behind her, trying to draw her attention. The movement in the scene, of actors and camera, perfectly underscores what the scene is about.

A beautifully made film. If only they could now change the cast.

Nobody Listened is a documentary by the great cinematographer Nestor Almendros and the Cuban-born filmmaker Jorge Ulla. Principally it consists of interviews with 30 political prisoners of the Castro regime who, after release—sometimes after decades—left Cuba. Some testified at a tribunal held in Paris in 1986 by Resistance International. Braided with these interviews are scenes in Cuba, speeches of Castro's and some of his people, enough to give dark context to the interviews. Everything is handled with unobtrusive skill. (The film will be shown on PBS in January.)

The bitterness of *Nobody Listened*, beyond the prison horrors it relates, is that all these men and women were revolutionaries—anti-Batista activists and radicals, mostly social democrats, who fought alongside Castro in the early days. (We see a clip of the beardless Castro in those early days, assuring us in English that he wants to establish a democracy in Cuba.) When Castro abandoned democratic aims and turned to Soviet alliance and dependency, these people protested and suffered for it. This seems to be the reason that they survived out of the many prisoners who were killed: Castro wanted these former friends to suffer, not to die.

The best comment on the film is in the film, spoken at the Paris Tribunal by René Tavernier, the author who is the father of the film director Bertrand Tavernier. I quote from it at length:

> From the First World War on, we have seen, especially among intellectuals, a certain kind of understandable anguish as we face the tragedy of history, expressed in each case by a mythical "Revolution." A certainly harsh but pure measure, it will liberate the world from all past errors and create a new society. Thus began the belief between the two world wars in Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler.
>
> And at the end of World War II, there was renewed belief in Stalin. Finally, no longer deceived by this horrible illusion, we abandoned the idea of Moscow, the land of salvation. The dream would come from elsewhere. Mao would bring it. . . .
>
> Then someone arrived in a small country. It was a treat for intellectuals. No big power, no cold monster. This time it is Cuba and Castro who liberates his country from the ridiculous, shameful tyranny of Batista. Besides, Castro is a friend of the intellectuals, or he pretends to be, so we believe him. We were wrong before, but this revolution will work! Well, the lie has moved from a huge to a small country. . . . This eternal illusion is . . . nurtured within us by that innocent yet guilty need to have our conscience easily cleaned instead of facing reality with courage. . . . □

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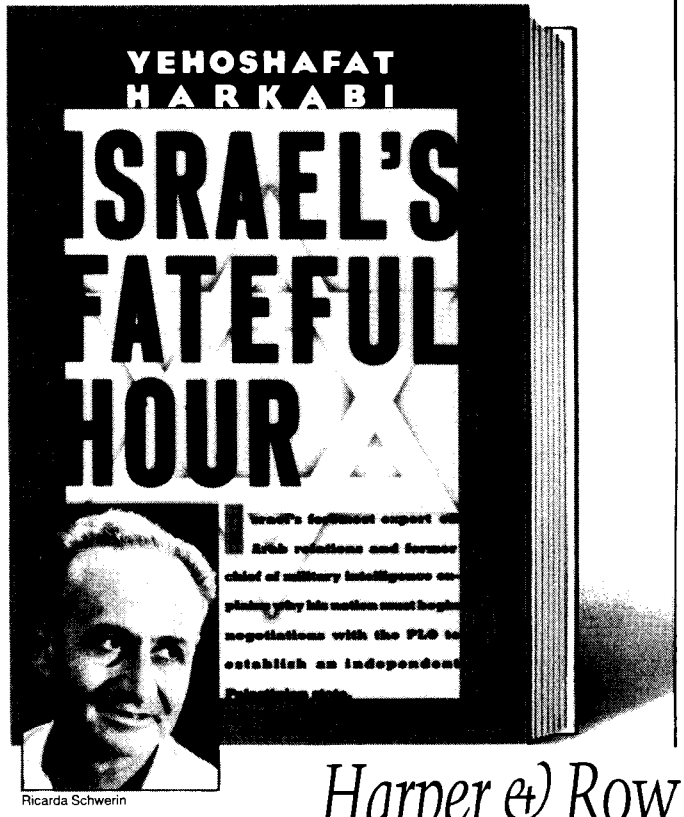

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ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Kid Coriolanus

Although Shakespeare rarely displays affection for what he called the "beast with a thousand heads," his scorn for people's power is nowhere more evident than in *Coriolanus*. Bernard Shaw once defined democracy as substituting government by the incompetent many for rule by the corrupt few. Shakespeare's few are more arrogant than corrupt, but his many are not only incompetent but mindless and vicious. Representing the nobility they would curb, Caius Marcius (awarded the name of Coriolanus after his victory at Corioli) is a Roman general whose dauntless courage in battle against the Volsces qualifies him for election as a Consul. But he is too proud to pretend respect for the "voices" required to endorse his election or to grovel before this "common cry of curs." As a result, through the machinations of some jealous politicians, he earns the hatred of the masses and banishment from the country he helped to save. The timeliness of the play is almost too obvious to mention. Imagine Coriolanus equipped with a couple of media experts, some well-placed sound bites, and a thousand points of light.

Coriolanus
by William Shakespeare
(New York Public Theater)

Steven Berkoff's muscular, energized New York Public Theater production never apologizes for the play's antimajoritarian bias. Quite the contrary, it demonstrates how thin a line exists between populism and fascism, between democracy and demagoguery. In this radical adaptation, we are in a police state where an "ensemble" of citizens costumed in torn jackets and wielding baseball bats—they also treble as senators and soldiers—rants, screams, threatens, and shouts whenever its collective will is thwarted. It is during the scenes between Marcius and the citizens that the production gathers the most steam. Advised by his mother and his friends to boast of his exploits and show his battle scars, Marcius responds by bidding the people to "wash their faces. And keep their teeth clean." Christopher Walken adds an "Ugh." Walken turns Marcius's pretended humility into farce. Appalled at having to occupy the same space with these "stinking breaths," he mocks their power over him ("May I change these garments?"), supplicating in accents heavy with irony: "I pray, let me ha' it; I have *wooounds* to show you."

Walken is not the most patrician Coriolanus in memory. His manner often resembles that of the rabble he detests, and this makes it hard to believe that he and his mother, Volumnia, elegantly played by Irene Worth, come from the same family (they were better matched as Chance Wayne and the Princess Kosmonopolis in *Sweet Bird of Youth*). He rages against "the tongues of the common mouth," but his own gritty urban dialect marks him as a member of a similar class. Walken, furthermore, does not seem particularly comfortable inside Berkoff's highly choreographed production, which has him—and the rest of the cast—running, marching, riding, and fighting in a frenetic ballet (even the women sew in unison). Walken, a gifted dancer, sometimes seems purposely out of step, as if protesting the rigid boundaries of the concept. Still, what he lacks in nobility he more than compensates for in command and charisma. He is one of our most daring, unpredictable, and dangerous actors, and for most of the evening he is fascinating.

Walken plays Coriolanus less like a soldier than like a prize-fighter. His hips in constant motion, he shambles, spars, feints, wriggles, and chops as if he were replaying his part in *Kid Champion*. Using imaginary weapons against the enemy, he slaps and kicks his own soldiers. With the rebellious plebeians he uses his fists, punching them out with well-placed cuts to the face and body. In a fury from his first entrance, he stalks the stage like a sullen hood in a black leather long coat. Always at top energy, he rasps, roars, yells, and snarls, then just as quickly lapses into a soft, ironic smile. With his mother he is less the obedient child than the silken wooer. Worth, lipping and tasting Volumnia's verse, comes on like a slightly dotty Madame Arcati in *Blithe Spirit*; Walken courts her like a lover, even leading her into a brief little dance. "There's no man in the world more bound to his mother," Volumnia tells us—and in the climactic scene Aufidius drives him into a fatal rage by calling Coriolanus a "boy of tears": "I flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli," he replies, "Alone I did it. 'Boy!' " But Walken seems parentless. Among his "faults in surplus" one cannot count filial dependency.

Still, the performance is tumultuous and so is the production (sometimes to cover a little shallowness). On a black marbleized floor, decorated with 12 straight-back chairs (also black), the show moves forward with manic energy, punctuated by loud percussive music. The interracial "ensemble" of actors, in constant motion, change roles so fast that it's sometimes hard to identify them. They are in black too; so is most of the cast. Tullus Aufidius, costumed in a synthetic black jumpsuit, Sam Browne belt, studded gloves, and jackboots, is played by Keith David as a mature and commanding African dictator, his spine arched with military stiffness, always standing at parade rest. Larry Bryggman and André Braugher as the scheming Roman tribunes wear the pin-striped suits and black slouch hats of Mafia henchmen (Braugher's shaved head and granny glasses also give him a marked resemblance to Malcolm X). Playing the Roman generals, Moses Gunn, stolid and saturnine as Cominius, and Thomas Kopache, wily and hooded as Titus Lartius, are friendly accomplices. And Paul Hecht plays Coriolanus's elder friend, Menenius, as a dapper wit in a fur-collared overcoat and homburg, cogently speaking his "pretty tale" of the body's revolt against the head.

Nevertheless, this Rome is in a parlous political condition; even the graciousness of the three ladies, Volumnia, Virgilia, and Valeria, cannot redeem its overwhelming masculine brutalism. In Berkoff's production, it has been brought to this state by the lures and traps of democratic rule. "With every minute you do change a mind," snarls Coriolanus to the mob, "And call him noble what was now your hate, / Him vile that was your garland"—which is a pretty fair description of the media-soaked, poll-dominated electorate. Were Coriolanus chosen, he would hardly have been a judicious leader, but he was the only hope for peace. By the end of the play, the one possibility for political resolution—a Roman-Volscian treaty negotiated by Coriolanus after his mother prostrated herself before him—is abandoned on

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stage, a useless envelope lying inside a tattered briefcase.

IT IS absurd to try to cram into my few remaining paragraphs a coherent response to *The Forest*, an epic adventure devised by Robert Wilson with the musical connivance of David Byrne. This is an achievement that not only makes critics feel inadequate but humbles the whole theatrical profession. Imported for nine performances by the Brooklyn Academy of Music New Wave Festival, *The Forest* was first created for the Theater der Freien Volksbühne in West Berlin at an estimated cost of $4 million (most of the bill paid by the city). In return for spending so much of Germany's lavish arts budget, it may very well be the most Teutonic of Wilson's creations.

The Forest is based on the Babylonian story of *Gilgamesh*, a Mesopotamian epic written in cuneiform on clay tablets around the second millennium before Christ (it was discovered only last century among the ruins of Nineveh). It pays homage to these mind-boggling spans of time through a kind of Wagnerian fusing of music, theater, art, history, sociology, and myth. As one might expect, Wilson and his literary collaborators (Heine Müller and Darryl Pinckney) have deconstructed the story. But despite a radical adaptation that breaks the casual narrative of the epic and places the action in the 19th century, *The Forest* has more sequential coherence than most Wilson works, and further signifies his growing preoccupation with text.

Gilgamesh concerns an attractive, oppressive king of Uruk whose demands on the citizenry—including the right of *primus noctes*—are so arbitrary that the gods create a rival to rebuke him, the wild man Enkidu. In order to exhaust Enkidu's animal strength and weaken his power over the beasts, Gilgamesh sends a prostitute to seduce him. Emasculated by the blandishments of sex and civilization, Enkidu subsequently succumbs to Gilgamesh, as the wilderness succumbs to urban development. Although Enkidu loses his battle with Gilgamesh, the men have become fast friends as the first part of the epic ends.

In the account of the story from which I cribbed this synopsis, Elizabeth Williams suggests that the rivalry between Gilgamesh and Enkidu "represents the clash of culture and nature, of an urban versus a nomadic life, of the 'raw versus the cooked.' " Wilson and his collaborators have translated this into a visual commentary on the rise of German industrialism, no doubt glancing at its malign responsibility for the decimation of the Black Forest. The evening—which lasts almost four hours—is structured in seven acts, separated by two knee plays (abstract movements in space executed by four dancers and choreographed by Suzushi Hanayagi). In typical Wilsonian fashion, the acts parallel each other (one and seven, two and six, etc.), with Act IV forming a solitary, ambitious centerpiece. Visual parallels abound as well. The bars on the drawing-room windows, separating the industrialist Gilgamesh from his lobotomized workers, for example, parallel those that fall over the opening of Enkidu's cave (further paralleling settings in other Wilson works, particularly *The Life and Times of Joseph Stalin*).

I can only hint at the complexity of Wilson's structure here. But even those who find the form or content of *The Forest* overly dense are rewarded with a wealth of dazzling and exquisitely executed dream images that remain imprinted on the mind's eye long after the curtain falls: the splitting of the sun into planets, revealing a beached monster gasping on the sand while a child plays with a model of a small city; factory workers laboring on huge ladders near massive gears as Gilgamesh smokes in his chair, attended by eerie domestics and a torpid lion; the golden Enkidu in his cave, accompanied by an armored knight, a figure in doublet and hose, a man cooking himself in a vat, and an outsized porcupine; the slow motion seduction of Enkidu by a lipstick-stained whore as animals and trees move across the stage in stately procession; the rock and ice landscapes of the concluding acts, where the two men join in battle with a dragon.

Inadequate to encompass such an intricate achievement, journalism can only salute it. Though the final two acts drag and seem unfinished, *The Forest* is a major work in the Wilson canon, suggestive of Chereau's industrialized *Ring* cycle, yet entirely unique. It is acted with powerful intensity by a highly disciplined, striking-looking German cast (Wilson himself provides a taped voice-over). It is enhanced by Müller's gnomic German-English text and by Byrne's swingy percussive score, with its echoes of processional New Orleans brass bands. It is designed with such beauty that each stage picture constitutes a work of art. It reinforces Wilson's position as one of the great visionary artists of the world. □

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THE FACES OF MASTERY

Letters and Drawings of Bruno Schulz, with Selected Prose
edited by Jerzy Ficowski
translated by Walter Arendt with Victoria Nelson
preface by Adam Zagajewski

(Harper & Row, 256 pp., illustrations, $25)

I.

THIS IS A scrapbook rather than a book, a fascicle with photographs and drawings inset on its pages among letters and press clippings. Its design seems consciously to imitate the randomness of an old album, a book of personal memorabilia swelling with cuttings pasted in over the years, a disarray of traces left behind by a long since extinguished existence.

But the randomness, in this case, is owed to the arbitrariness of death, not to the haphazard hustle of life. There is an aura of incompleteness about this book. It is not even an entire scrapbook: just a handful of torn-out and rumpled pages snatched miraculously from the grasp of doom. The fact that we can read *Letters and Drawings of Bruno Schulz* today is a miracle. The spirit of nothingness that, for lack of a better term, we call History wanted these scraps of paper to have perished, together with the human hand that covered them with letters and lines. Unlike Franz Kafka, to whom he is often compared, Bruno Schulz did not have to ask a friend to burn his manuscripts after his death. In his time, and in his part of Europe, the task of lighting an all-devouring fire was History's itself.

By painstakingly assembling the Polish edition of this book from whatever could be found in the postwar ashes, Schulz's own Max Brod, his tireless biographer and editor Jerzy Ficowski, disobeyed not the writer's last will, but the will of the Holocaust. It is largely thanks to him that we are left today not only with Schulz's self-portrayal as it is reflected obliquely on the pages of his two wondrous collections of short stories, but also with Schulz's image in a more literal sense: with his unforgettable face staring at us from the pages of this book.

II.

IN THE perfunctory, iconic, short-attention-span culture of our days, the ultimate measure of success for a writer is not so much being widely read as being widely recognized. Recognized, that is, visually: as a face or a silhouette, etched in our otherwise scatterbrained cultural memory. Kafka's eyes, icy and pained, in his last photograph; Joyce poring over a manuscript with a magnifying glass in his hand; Beckett's profile of an aloof bird of prey; old Auden's tectonic furrows and wrinkles: these images have a staying power of their own. Heavy with the symbolism we put into it, each portrait in this gallery of famous faces is a popular condensation of the writer's work, a condensation so immediately and deceptively comprehensible that it promises (or threatens) to outlive the work itself.

Something like that is happening to the image of Bruno Schulz. It is not only for the unquestionable brilliance of his meager but captivating oeuvre that this writer has recently been moving so fast toward the limelight of the West's cultural attention. And it is not only due to the fact that the rich texture of his background—he was a Jew writing in Polish in a small town in Polish Galicia that was once part of the Austrian empire and now belongs to the Soviet Ukraine—epitomizes the cultural complexity associated with the fashionable concept of Central Europe. There seem to be other reasons, more subconscious perhaps, having to do with the image of Schulz fixed in our collective mind's eye. Forty-six years after he was shot by a Gestapo agent in the street of his backwater hometown of Drohobycz, this morbidly shy high school teacher of arts and crafts who happened to be a great writer appears as another haunting face in the row of the most suggestive portraits of 20th-century authors.

The difference is that Schulz etched his features in our memory quite literally, by leaving a number of graphics and drawings (some of them illustrations to his short stories) in which his own face catches the eye time and again. We owe our knowledge of what Schulz looked like more to these illustrations, in fact, than to the few blurred photographs of him. The surviving photos show his face invariably at a peculiar angle, strangely foreshortened, as if he were glancing coyly upward from some humble, kneeling position (strikingly reminiscent of the actual position of his alter ego's body in etchings such as "Dedication" or "A Book of Idolatry"). His sunken eyes hide uneasily under his prominent, almost simian eyebrows. He looks like the facial epitome of an inferiority complex, of introversion. This is also true of the group photos, in each of which he seems to have just been stricken by an anxiety attack, withdrawing into himself and striving in quiet panic toward the picture's background or corner even when he actually remains in its foreground.

Schulz's drawings or *cliché-verre* etchings, which often border on fantasy, show him more revealingly. And more shockingly. Even by today's standards, Schulz's way of portraying himself is sometimes disturbingly "indecent." It overtly reveals what society expects to be suppressed, or at least symbolically disguised. In his early graphics, in particular, he sheds all inhibitions and descends into the dark depths of his life's central obsession.

Consider "Wild Beasts," one of the etchings included in the portfolio "A Book of Idolatry" that Schulz assembled and let circulate as a limited edition in 1920-21 (that is, several years before he finally switched from art to literature). A teenage girl, dressed in a skimpy, pulled-up nightshirt or slip, sits in an armchair, with her legs spread and her hands crossed over the darkness of her crotch. Her left hand holds a whip; her right leg has a black stocking and a high-heeled shoe on, while the naked left leg, touching the floor with its toes, appears almost luminescent against the dense darkness that lurks beneath the chair. The left shoe, apparently kicked off, rests on the floor in the picture's foreground. Also on the floor, crawling in from the right side toward, it seems, both the girl's bare foot and the shoe, is the naked figure of a man with Schulz's features. His eyes are half-closed and his mouth is half-open in animal ecstasy—or is it the pain of someone having just been whipped? The relation between light and shadow, as well as the etching's composition (the girl's commanding, dynamic figure towering over

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and turned slightly away from the crawling male torso), make the picture brim with compressed, implicit violence.

This is, obviously, a masochistic and fetishistic self-portrait. Interestingly, in Schulz's prose the motif of the man's humiliation by the woman (usually by the vulgar female servant Adela) does occur, but generally in a much less obtrusive and sexually explicit form. This kind of relationship recurs with obsessive frequency, however, in most of Schulz's graphic works and drawings: a woman or a girl, naked, half-naked, or at least provocatively dressed, often in black stockings and high-heeled shoes, long-legged and round-breasted to the point of fashion-magazine idealization, hovers luminescently over the dark, crouched, miserable figure of her male worshiper, who crawls toward her, kneels in front of her, kisses her feet, lets himself be kicked or trampled. In many pictures, the male figure multiplies into a whole tribe of idolatrous admirers of varying ages and degrees of ugliness.

THE FACT that they mostly form a symbolic representation of Schulz himself is beyond doubt. We are encouraged to identify him in these pictures, not merely on the basis of the facial likeness, but also on the strength of what we know about his actual sexual obsessions. The prudish norms of Polish small-town society between the wars, and the public image he had to keep as an educator of the young, made Schulz suppress his deviations almost totally; they were revealed mainly through his art. Yet even in his lifetime there were people to whom he did open up, either deliberately or against his better judgment. Ficowski has managed to reach and to interview some of these people in his meticulous investigation of the writer's life. Some of their reminiscences (not included in this collection, but published in Poland as a separate booklet in 1984) correspond amazingly with motifs and scenes in Schulz's drawings. There is a woman, for instance, who recalls a scene in 1921. She was 12; Schulz, a family friend, was painting her portrait; and he seems to have lost control and behaved for a while not unlike the man in "Wild Beasts."

Meddlesome and indiscreet though they may be, such pieces of literary gossip reaffirm in our minds the image of Schulz the masochist, Schulz the seeker of humiliation. In the eyes of a detective

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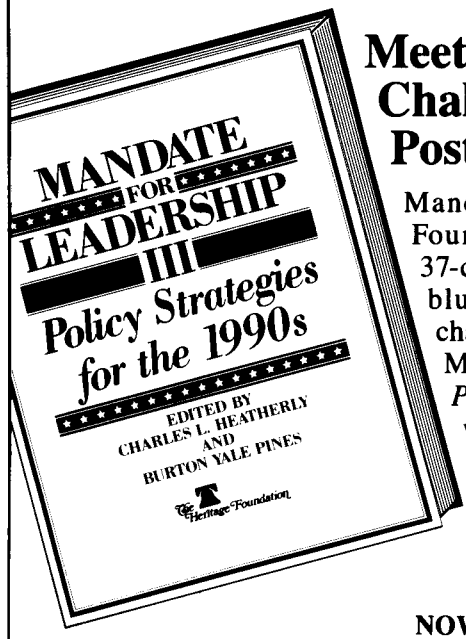

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from some literary vice squad, all the evidence would corroborate that Schulz was exactly this in his life, at least in his intimate life. His symbolic image, pasted together from document, art, and gossip, stares at us with the moist eyes of a whipped dog. Yet symbolic images have a tendency to acquire a life of their own. Their way of singling out a crucial element of a personality inevitably turns into zeroing in on one particular element alone. A living face ends up frozen in a single grimace.

Under the spell of his self-created image as a masochist, we may miss the fact that Schulz was also something else. We tend to see the entirety of his life, not merely his intimate life, as governed by a single principle: the principle of seeking humiliation and suffering as a perverse source of pleasure. In some of Schulz's admirers this tendency has gone to truly bizarre lengths. The Polish critic Artur Sandauer, whose meritorious role in popularizing Schulz's work should not be forgotten, had a theory that the writer's masochism was tantamount to a drive toward self-destruction. He was killed, Sandauer maintained in all seriousness, precisely because he instinctively sought death, procrastinating endlessly after he was offered a chance to escape from Nazi-occupied Drohobycz. This is biographical baloney, a pseudo-psychoanalytic approach that finds the chief symptom of the patient's death wish in the fact that he is dead. But the standard legend of Schulz encourages such silliness, with its insistence that he was bent on misfortune and humiliation at any cost.

The full truth, as usual, is more complex. In his life, as in his drawings, Schulz was indeed constantly trampled by reality's sadistic foot. (The Polish word for "reality" is of feminine gender, by the way.) His letters, particularly those written to female friends, reveal his acute sense of inadequacy, unfulfillment, and unrealized potential time and again. He writes to Romana Halpern in 1936: "It seems to me I have been swin-

A Few Words On Bruno Schulz

I have never been to the town of Drohobycz, and I never met Bruno Schulz. Still, in the circles of young Polish poets to which I belonged in the late 1930s, Schulz's name was surrounded by a special, magical aura. Remembering this today, I find in that phenomenon of early, instinctive respect a confirmation of a general rule: it is usually a certain feeling for an artist's exceptional stature that announces his future fame.

Schulz has been translated into several languages, and it seems, paradoxically, that his staunchest admirers are in West Germany. Yet it is not easy to make out of Bruno Schulz an international writer. He was born in Poland, he died in Poland, and the most salient characteristic of Schulz as a writer is his intimacy with the Polish language. Exuberance, the luxury of his baroque prose, differentiates him from the ascetic Kafka, and brings him close to untranslatability. He provides a valid argument against Isaac Bashevis Singer's negative opinion of those Jewish writers who chose to write in Polish instead of Yiddish.

According to Singer, Polish writers of Jewish background acted, as it were, against their background, and for that reason their language was too literary, if not outright stiff. Of course, Poland in the decades preceding the Second World War produced fine writers in Yiddish: Singer himself, Chaim Grade, Nahum Bomse (the latter two died in New York after the war), Abraham Sutzkever (who lives in Israel), as well as all those whose literary potentials were destroyed with their bodies. Still, we encounter a paradox. For those Polish writers who were the most energetic in exploring the resources of the Polish tongue, and contributed the most to its richness in modern poetry, were Jewish: Boleslaw Lesmian, a poet whose name should be ranked with the greatest poets of this century, but is not, for his verse is totally untranslatable; Julian Tuwim, equilibrist of meter and rhyme; Jan Brzechwa, whose poems for children have been loved by several generations; my late friend Aleksander Wat, a poet of dadaist provenance; and Bruno Schulz.

Schulz was, by profession, a teacher of drawing and a refined artist. As a writer, however, he was more than commonly language-oriented for a practitioner of prose. He cannot be called a novelist, or the author of short stories. He was creating, rather, a fantastic saga that was growing into what was, for him, *the book*. For Schulz, philosophy "is in fact philology, is a profound, creative investigation of the world." Because "the essence of reality is *meaning*. What has no meaning is not real for us. Every fragment of reality is alive because it participates in some universal meaning. Old cosmologies used to express this by saying that in the beginning there was the word." For Schulz, the function of poetry (and he means, justly, his own work) was to restore the original, mythical dimension lost by words, which he compared to fragments of a body of a legendary snake. The snake has been cut to pieces, and its fragments search for each other.

A citizen of the Hapsburg empire, then of interwar Poland, Schulz was gluing together his mythology out of pieces gathered in his town of Drohobycz. He was particularly sensitive to the cheapness, the tawdriness, the sham of 20th-century civilization as it was ascending in provincial Europe. His feeling of decay is no less strong than Kafka's. It is nourished by his observation of so-called modernity in a region getting rich as a result of newly discovered oil fields. His story "The Street of Crocodiles" features prominently the modern practices of

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dling the world by some sort of flash or glitter when there is nothing inside me."

His mixed background alone could not help but brand him with a stigma of incompleteness. Writing in Polish made him an outcast among the Jews. Being Jewish made him a stranger in Polish culture. As if this suspension between the guilt of betrayal and the humiliation of non-belonging was not devastating enough, his everyday existence oppressed him, too: particularly onerous were 27 hours of teaching high school every week, which effectively stunted his creative growth. In 1942 he was the 50-year-old author of just two slender books.

Schulz's brutal death cut short a life that must have seemed to this exacting man an almost total failure, in emotional ties, family life, wealth, and social respect. The flash of fame he briefly enjoyed in the '30s was confined to Polish literary circles, and it was largely due to a happy coincidence. (It's unlikely that Schulz would ever have been published had it not been for the influence of the novelist Zofia Nalkowska, who reluctantly agreed to read his manuscript at the request of a mutual friend.)

Still, concentrating on what Schulz did not achieve, and losing sight of the fact that he did, after all, write the stories collected in *Cinnamon Shops* (in English, *The Street of Crocodiles*) and *Sanatorium under the Sign of the Hourglass*, distorts his true image quite heavily. In the final analysis, the popular perception makes him one of those people who in life irritate everybody with the odor of failure they seem to exude and who after their death evoke nothing but warm feelings. Unable to enter their already shut lives, we extend to them a vicarious, retroactive sort of help by idealizing them, even if this idealization makes them into ideal failures.

III.

WHAT MIGHT have been: there is a disquieting poem on the subject written a couple of years ago by the

selling and buying, and juxtaposes them to the ceremonious, ritualistic trade in the older part of the town. He describes a real street, similar in many respects to commercial American streets. This story is a good example of Schulz's search for meaning; that is, for a transformation of detail into a part of a mythical whole.

There are two pronouncements of

Schulz that provide a necessary commentary to his oeuvre. One is his lecture on the novel *Ferdydurke*, by his friend Witold Gombrowicz. The second is his answer to questions asked by one of the first admirers of his work, Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz. Today these three names—Schulz, Gombrowicz, Witkiewicz—are often pronounced together, as the names of friends and allies, though as writers they followed different paths.

Schulz found in Gombrowicz what he considered an extraordinary discovery, namely, the perception that there exists an underlining of human life, the other, inferior side, hidden behind a facade of "official" phrases, gestures, and rituals. According to Schulz, to speak of the basic immaturity and awkwardness of man, who spins out form for his self-protection, is to move away from Freud. Not libido, but a comic immaturity, is an elemental force, for Gombrowicz, in a constant clash with the conventionalized world of the adult. Schulz, analyzing Gombrowicz, reveals also his own fascination with everything that is normally dismissed as inferior, with trash, rubbish, flea market things, both in the sense of objects and of modes of behavior. His two books, *The Street of Crocodiles* and *Sanatorium under the Sign of the Hourglass*, are full of tailors' dummies, wax figures, top hats, chamber pots, stamp albums, medicine bottles, stuffed birds, music boxes. The characters in Schulz's fables about reality participate by their acts in a similarly bizarre and unstable environment, which is at the same time a constant explosion of form in movement.

From Schulz's letter to Witkiewicz we learn that he was chasing a reality in a state of fermentation, change, fluidity; and that the meaning of the world consisted for him in what he called "a specific monism of substance, in which particular objects are just masks." These masks appear for a moment and immediately are rejected. This is the origin of humor and irony as permanent ingredients of storytelling, for every object and every action reveals, the very instant it materializes, its own instability, its temporarily assumed role. Every form is undermined by an anti-form sticking its tongue out.

Let us not attempt to place Schulz in the panorama of world literature written during the decades that separate us from his death in 1942. In that time the disintegration of well-delineated entities, of essences, has progressed. For that reason Schulz may sound familiar. It seems to me, however, that he represents a vanguard, an often prophetic spirit of Central European art prior to World War II, a war that brought about the murder perpetrated by Europe on itself. Of the three most daring Polish experimenters, Witkiewicz committed suicide in September 1939, Schulz was killed by the Nazis in 1942, and Gombrowicz survived in Argentina. My guess is that the best way to read these writers is to recognize the specificity of their intellectual and artistic contribution, instead of attempting to integrate them into recent trends or fashions. Considered in that manner, Bruno Schulz reveals his uniqueness, his sense of a direction that could be taken by him only, that has not been taken, in fact, by anyone else.

CZESLAW MILOSZ

Czeslaw Milosz's *Collected Poems, 1931-1987* was recently published by Ecco Press.

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magnificent Polish poet Wislawa Szymborska. The man portrayed in the poem is an oldish intellectual sitting at a table in a cafeteria, presumably in the rather paltry retreat that the Polish Writer's Union maintains in the mountain resort of Zakopane. We observe all the minute particulars of his worn-out appearance and his trivial behavior, from his warts and bald pate to the way he studies a newspaper while waiting to be served his noodle soup. Just before the end of the poem someone addresses him by his surname, "Mr. Baczynski." The name rings a bell in every Polish ear. Suddenly the reader understands why the whole poem was written in the conditional. It is a poem about what might have been if Krzysztof Kamil Baczynski, a handsome 23-year-old poet of genius, had not died a heroic death as a fighter in the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. Had Baczynski lived in postwar Poland, he might have been, he would have been, one of us, an ordinary, tired, cynical survivor.

A similar poem could be written about Bruno Schulz, even if his withdrawn, humiliated face offers much less of a contrast with his hypothetical fate than Baczynski's youthful and heroic features. What would he have become, if he had not been shot in the street in Drohobycz in 1942? What would he have written, had he lived, say, 20 more years, in Warsaw or in Krakow as a citizen of People's Poland, repatriated from the Soviet Union after the postwar shifting of the state frontiers? Would he have completed *The Messiah*, the mythical novel he was writing before the war? Would he have written in the '50s in the same vein, and with the same brilliance, as he wrote in the '30s?

The answer is, we can't know. We can be sure, though, that the years after 1942 offered, in that part of Europe, no propitious ground for Schulz's kind of art. There is something pathetically symbolic in the fact that after the Soviet invasion of Poland's eastern territories in 1939, Schulz was forced to make his living in Drohobycz by painting gigantic portraits of Stalin for official ceremonies. By a similar perversity, he survived for a while under the Nazis, thanks to the dreadful taste of a Gestapo man who hired Schulz to decorate his child's bedroom with kitschy murals. (This seems also to have caused Schulz's death: he was shot by another Gestapo agent who held some petty grudge against the artist's Heil-Hitlering patron. Not that the latter cared too much.)

WILD BEASTS BY BRUNO SCHULZ

As for writing, the years of occupation only fortified the depression and the writer's block that Schulz coped with all his life. One day the legendary trove of papers that Schulz deposited, according to his friend Izydor Friedman, with a nameless "Catholic outside the ghetto" may be found. But whatever has survived from his wartime correspondence (for the most part, letters and postcards to the young painter Anna Plockier, another female friend and victim of the Holocaust) does not suggest that the trove contains any fiction written after 1939. Had Schulz himself survived and lived in Poland in the years of Stalinism, he would have most certainly become one of the writers and artists whose creativity was irreversibly warped, stunted, or quashed altogether by the suffocating hypocrisy and oppression of those times. Had he escaped the Nazi bullet in 1942, he would have soon found himself, with his kind of ethics and his kind of aesthetics, on a collision course with the "locomotive of history," whose mechanical charms the Socialist Realist poets were to idolize a few years later.

We may reach even further back. What would have been if Schulz's life up to 1939 had been just a little less difficult? What if he had lived, for example, not in Drohobycz, but in some vivacious cultural center? What if he had not been pushed into marginality by his mixed racial, religious, and cultural background? What if he had been financially independent enough to quit his hated "drudgery" at school and devote himself entirely to writing? What if he had been able to shake off his inhibitions, the paralyzing "lack of self-confidence" of which he complains so much in his letters?

Moved by the compassion we feel at the sight of Schulz's torments as they appear in his more intimate letters (and also in the official documents, such as his elaborately humble applications for grants sent to the Ministry of Education), we would rather have him happier in his life, if only a little bit. But the literary critic should know better. What made Bruno Schulz Bruno Schulz was precisely the life he had to bear. Had he not been burdened with his provinciality, his Jewishness, his poverty, his inferiority complex, his swarms of other miseries, he would have been a happier man, and a more prolific writer. But probably he would not have been a great writer, and certainly not the unique writer we admire. I do not mean to take Schulz as proof of the widely held opinion that only suffering makes an artist. That, too, would reduce

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Schulz's face to a masochist's grimace. The writer we know was the result not only of the life he had to bear, but also of the way he challenged and resisted this life. The way he fought back.

IV.

LETTERS AND DRAWINGS of Bruno Schulz is a priceless book because it brings this paradox to the light of day. Contrary to his masochistic self-portrayals in word and picture, most of Schulz's letters also show him determined to force his way out from the enchanted circle of humiliation, isolation, and marginality. Epistolary form was for him the most natural way to use the word to reach beyond and communicate with people—a much easier way, for this extremely shy man and extremely scrupulous artist, than oral communication and *stricto sensu* literature. He entered the edifice of literature through the vestibule of his correspondence: his first short stories were actually letters, unfortunately not preserved, to the writer Debora Vogel.

His correspondence was Schulz's basic way of establishing genuine and durable human contact. "I need a friend," he bluntly begins his letter to the young writer Tadeusz Breza in 1934. "I need the closeness of a kindred spirit. I long for some outside affirmation of the inner world whose existence I postulate." His unquenchable thirst for contact with the outside world made him cling for years to correspondents whose obvious intellectual inferiority made the exchange otherwise a waste of his time. Not that letters to kindred spirits were easier for him to write. There is always something strained about his way of addressing correspondents who achieved any sort of literary prominence, genuine celebrities like the poet Julian Tuwim or decidedly minor writers like the psychologist Stefan Szuman, whose weak poems Schulz makes great effort to praise.

His only surviving letter to Tuwim, thanking him for the recognition of Schulz's first book, is particularly telling. Originally written in beautiful but slightly stilted and ornately rhetorical Polish, these several sentences must have cost Schulz long hours of labor. Each of them seems to reflect his complicated inhibitions. He never ceases here to be conscious that he is writing to a celebrity, to an acknowledged master of style, to an influential man of letters. He laboriously tries to strike a balance between modesty and dignity, to prevent his homage from slipping into flattery, to express his thankfulness yet dispel the suspicion that he might be asking for further favors.

Schulz's numerous letters to his patroness, the famous and influential novelist Nalkowska, have perished. We can only guess how difficult it was for him to communicate with this worldly lady friend, who was as extroverted as he was withdrawn. The feelings involved must have been particularly complicated. We may be sure that Schulz was genuinely thankful to Nalkowska for having discovered and appreciated his work, but also that he could not help silently comparing her conventionally "modern" psychological novels with his own more innovative writing.

Schulz sounds much more at ease in correspondence with the few writers who really were his peers, Stanislaw Ignacy Witkiewicz and Witold Gombrowicz. Each of these giants of literary modernity was, needless to say, different from Schulz (he himself felt obliged to react to a 1938 review that stated his alleged influence on Gombrowicz by publicly declaring their mutual "autonomy and integrity"). Yet they served as Schulz's ideal readers. Witkiewicz and Gombrowicz were the authors of the two most pene-

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trating commentaries on Schulz's work published before the war. Schulz's surviving exchanges with them are confined to a couple of interviews, essays, and literary polemics; but even in these pieces, intended for publication, he is much more open and spontaneous than in his private letters to the celebrities of mainstream literary life.

His lively exchange with Gombrowicz, a half-serious "polemic" provoked by Gombrowicz's "Open Letter to Bruno Schulz," published in the obscure journal *Studio* in 1936, is highly characteristic of these writers' differences. Many years later Gombrowicz was to define writing as "nothing more than a battle that the artist wages with others for his own prominence"; and this cheeky maxim already lies at the bottom of his early instigation. Its central issue is the innovative artist's relationship with his audience. Quoting teasingly the opinion about Schulz as a "sick pervert or a poseur" pronounced by "a certain doctor's wife," Gombrowicz prods his reticent fellow innovator into greater forcefulness in imposing his uniqueness on the reader more directly.

Anticipating Schulz's reluctance and attributing it, not too delicately, to his masochism ("... perhaps, indulging in your masochistic tendencies, you will humiliate yourself and fall at the dainty toes of the satisfied doctor's wife"), he challenges him to respond to the silly accusations: "One must play the game with people on every level and in every possible situation. Our attitude toward matters of stupidity is perhaps even more important than our attitude toward the great, wise, principal problems."

In his retort, Schulz shows a rare glimpse of good-natured humor. He agrees to play ball with Gombrowicz's indiscreet joke: "Certainly, I appreciate and admit with all my heart that the doctor's wife has beautiful thighs, but I put this matter in its own place. I can ensure that my worship of the doctor's wife's legs does not filter down into a totally inappropriate area." What he means by "inappropriate area" is the area of art, where he resolutely—and seriously, this time—rejects Gombrowicz's idea of "playing the game with people on every level":

> You say this is the face of life? You say not only that we, the brighter and better, have the right to make fun of the doctor's wife, but also that you acknowledge her equal right to scorn, disdain, and ridicule? In that case you stand on the side of inferiority against superiority. You try to compromise our actions by casting before our eyes the massive torso of the doctor's wife, and you identify with her thick-headed chuckles. You claim that in her person you defend vitality and biology, against abstraction, against our detachment from life. If this is biology, Witold, then you must mean the force of her immobility; if this is vitality you must mean her heavy passive mass.
>
> But the avant-garde of biology is thought, experiment, creative discovery. We, in fact, are this belligerent biology, this conquering biology; we are the truly vital.

Here, and in other startlingly trenchant theoretical statements on art and literature scattered on the pages of this scrapbook, we finally see Schulz from his other, unexpected side. Instead of the passive sufferer with the sunken eyes, he looms in these pieces (in particular, in his afterword to Kafka's *The Trial*, his review of Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke*, and his crucial essay "The Mythologizing of Reality") as the mind we know from his short stories: the tough, "belligerent," and "conquering" mind of an uncompromising artist.

He was much closer, in fact, to Gombrowicz than their polemical fervor, cranked up for the sake of argument, would suggest. Both had in mind the conquest of reality rather than the conquest of "the doctor's wife," the audience of their time. Both were loners: two of the greatest loners in 20th-century literature. They differed only in their methods. Gombrowicz preferred to unmask reality; Schulz, to "mythologize" it, to intensify its "universal masquerade" and thus reconstruct its "universal Sense."

They differed in one more essential thing. Gombrowicz's "conquering" attitude in matters of literature was entirely consistent with his life, with his unobfuscated pursuit of his own artistic "prominence." Schulz had a more dialectical attitude: his personality stretches between the extremes of a masochistic self-humiliation of his private ego in the face of the world and a demiurgic imposition of his creative self upon the world. Precisely what gives him reasons for passive suffering in his intimate life appears as the source of his firm grip on reality in his artistic life.

Here, the wounded face we know from his pictures and letters, lamenting over his "profound loneliness." There, the closing sentence of an essay he wrote on himself in 1935: "Loneliness is the catalyst that makes reality ferment, precipitates its surface layer of figures and colors." And there, too, the absolute, unyielding exactitude of the rhythms and the images he used in his prose to make this fermenting reality seethe forever in our ears and eyes. As a man, he was more vulnerable than most. As an artist, he was as tough as anybody.

STANISLAW BARANCZAK

Stanislaw Baranczak is the Alfred Jurzykowski Professor of Polish Language and Literature at Harvard University.

STILL WAITING

Yes, and after all this we stand, still waiting
for those people to arrive and to perform
their miracles among us. Isn't it just
like them to keep us waiting? It's been so long

since we first made ready that the town could use
another coat of paint; someone ought to feed
the children; the Senators might as well sit
down. The feasting-tables have begun to stink,

and servant-boys—waiters!—can't keep off the birds.
The pennants hang like laundry. The afternoon
is failing altogether, and as they say,
evening is already at the gates. So I

embroider this longest part of what will be
an exaggerated day, drawing figures
with a stick where the sand was smoothed out for them.
To pass the time. *Relief*, you could call it that.

I must have always known—I'm sure I explained:
these foreigners are forever on their way,
invariably late. Do they even know
what *late* means? Do they have the word in their
tongue?

Just the same, we know they have to be coming.
They have no interest in books, conversation—
slow as they are, they could hardly stay at home,
so easily bored, so discontent, so great.

SCOTT CAIRNS

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THE GOOD SOLDIER

Waging Peace and War: Dean Rusk in the Truman, Kennedy and Johnson Years by Thomas J. Schoenbaum

(Simon and Schuster, 592 pp., $22.95)

Faithful, obedient, and self-sacrificing, Dean Rusk was every official's dream of a perfect subordinate. During his eight years as secretary of state to both John F. Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, he seems never to have leaked a story to the media, never to have threatened to resign over battles of policy or turf, never to have stabbed a bureaucratic rival in the back, never even to have sabotaged a policy he disagreed with.

From the bright dawn of Camelot to the dark night of Tet, he was the good soldier, who saw no greater honor than protecting his chief from harm, and taking the blame when things went wrong. When Kennedy, interviewing him for a job just after the 1960 election, asked him what was the most important qualification for a secretary of state, Rusk replied: loyalty. JFK, who wanted in any case to run foreign policy himself, had found his man. A few months later, after Kennedy's fiasco at the Bay of Pigs (which Rusk had his doubts about, but failed to argue against), Rusk proved his mettle. At a Cabinet meeting where everyone else was running for cover, Rusk rallied the troops with the plea: "What matters now is this man. We have to save this man!"

It was not the first time he had laid himself on the line. In March 1950, amid McCarthyite charges that "communists" in the State Department had "lost" China to the Reds, Rusk, a deputy undersecretary, volunteered to take on the job as assistant secretary for Far Eastern affairs. Figuring that he was invulnerable to Red-baiting charges, he was applying, in effect, for a demotion. A flabbergasted Secretary of State Dean Acheson gratefully accepted, and he did not forget. Ten years later he urged Kennedy to give Rusk the top job at State.

Among today's kiss-and-betray officials, who work out their book contracts even before they move into their offices, Rusk seems like a visitor from another planet. Not only has he refused to write his memoirs, but in office he did not even keep a diary, lest his associates fear he might violate their privacy. And unlike those who carted away truckloads of documents on leaving Washington, he sought to protect the presidents he served by destroying records of confidential conversations he held with them.

Such loyalty has got to be its own reward. For when policies fail as totally as the Vietnam War did, those who stand at the barricades rarely get golden parachutes. When the curtain fell on the Johnson administration, Rusk, whose whole life had been spent in loyal service to the mighty, found himself without a protector. Although he had once been president of the Rockefeller Foundation, the best job he was offered was a professorship of international law at the University of Georgia, his native state. There he remains today, modest and retiring, keeping to himself all the secrets he knows.

Thomas J. Schoenbaum, who carries the title of director of the Dean Rusk Center for Comparative and International Law at Georgia, had the double task of being objective about his subject and spinning an interesting narrative from what are mostly public documents. He has acquitted himself of both challenges admirably. The result is a biography that is sympathetic but never apologetic, and that offers new insights into a still controversial period.

During his long tenure as secretary of state, Rusk was often pilloried for being impassive, inscrutable, and "Buddha-like." He would sit through Cabinet meetings and never express an opinion. His secretiveness made him the butt of comedy. Yet what his critics ignored, and what this scrupulously fair and impressively researched book makes clear, is that clearly Rusk was doing something right. He served longer in office than anyone in this century except for Cordell Hull, who played a not dissimilar role in the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Rusk offered both loyalty and competence to men who put a higher value on those qualities than they did on imagination or forcefulness. If either Kennedy or Johnson had wanted an innovator as

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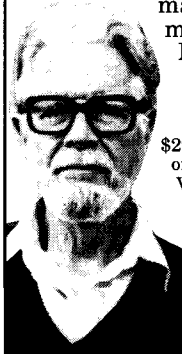

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secretary of state, he would have appointed one. Those who complained that Rusk was not assertive enough, that he was an "enigma," wanted something different from him than did the presidents who appointed him.

Schoenbaum avoids a psychological reading of his subject, but he offers some telling insights when he notes Rusk's "remarkable facility for fitting in perfectly with any group." This competent man, who had risen so high because of his reliability, was never able to shake himself loose from authority figures. "Always conscious of the fact that he did not quite belong in the world of the elite . . . ," Schoenbaum observes, "he would instinctively support those in charge and protect those who, as he put it, 'had the burden of decision.' " This is how he, a simple country boy from backwoods Georgia, had climbed so nimbly on the ladder of opportunity: a scholarship to a small liberal arts college in North Carolina, a Rhodes to Oxford, staff jobs in the China theater and Washington during World War II, mid-level posts in the State Department, and finally, in 1952, the presidency of the Rockefeller Foundation. His is one of the great American success stories: the kind to inspire earnest young boys from impoverished families to study hard, watch their manners, and respect their elders.

Rusk saw himself essentially as a protector rather than an innovator, as a paid employee rather than one of the bosses. He resented those who tried to break down the lines of authority. He particularly distrusted the media for trying to discover "secrets" that properly belonged in the private hoard of government officials. "Secretive and distrustful of those who dared question the authority of their betters," he never tried, unlike such other parvenus as Clark Clifford and Henry Kissinger, to become one of the prime movers himself.

THERE IS an honored place in public life for such persons, and the machinery of government depends on them. But they do not leave much of an imprint on policy. The 1960s will never be known as the Rusk years. Still, in a sense they could be; for what Schoenbaum so skillfully shows is the degree to which Rusk exemplified, and even sincerely believed, the conventional wisdom of the day. There is something almost touching in his lack of guile or cynicism.

When Kennedy, interviewing him during the interregnum, asked his views on American foreign policy, Rusk replied that the American postwar record was one of "restraint, responsibility, and generosity." One could, to be sure, make a case that it was, or for that matter, that it wasn't. The point is that while statesmen may talk that way to the Omaha World Affairs Council, they certainly don't to each other. Can one imagine Kissinger saying such a thing to Nixon? And if he did, would Nixon have offered him a job? But Dean Rusk does talk that way, and Kennedy did give him a job. Kennedy wanted someone who would say the right things with sincerity and not have an agenda of his own; otherwise he would have named either J. W. Fulbright or George Ball, both men of independent judgment superbly qualified for the post. In Rusk he found an able front man who offended no powerful constituencies—an obliging fall guy.

Rusk was also unlikely to offend the conservative constituency that Kennedy was eager to reassure, and that he sought to appease on the domestic front by his appointment of segregationist federal judges in the South. In 1947, before the Truman "loyalty" program went into operation, Rusk ordered an FBI security check of all 227 people in the State Department office on U.N. affairs to demonstrate that his predecessor, Alger Hiss, had not planted Communist spies there. Two years later, when NATO was being put together, he urged friendly relations with fascist Spain and, Schoenbaum relates, "was a major factor in the reversal of the American policy of ostracizing the Franco government." Though he felt a "private revulsion against McCarthyism, he never denounced the investigating committees or attacked the intelligence or integrity of its members."

RUSK ALSO HAD the confidence of the pro-Chiang Kai-shek China Lobby that for years inhibited normal relations with the Communist government in Peking. In 1951, as assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern affairs, he spoke, together with John Foster Dulles and Henry Luce, at a China Lobby banquet. Declaring that the Chinese had entered the Korean War under orders from Moscow, he described China as "a colonial Russian government—a Slavic Manchukuo on a larger scale." He even implicitly supported an effort to overthrow the Communist regime. The *New York Times* considered the speech important enough to put on the front page under the headline: "RUSK HINTS U.S. AID TO REVOLT IN CHINA."

Rusk's hostility to the Chinese Communists was reinforced by North Korea's invasion of South Korea in June 1950. Spurring an Indian-backed compromise to restore the status quo ante and give Peking the U.N. seat still held by Taiwan, he instead publicly called for a Korea unified by American arms. He was, according to Schoenbaum, the "chief proponent of this idea within the administration"; and, together with Gen. Douglas MacArthur, sold it to Truman and Acheson. The rest was avoidable history. American troops pushed toward the Chinese border to implement this plan, China's army intervened, and the war lasted inconclusively for another three years with heavy casualties on both sides.

Although he favored a two-Chinas policy by 1961, and suggested this to an unreceptive Kennedy, Rusk saw the war in Vietnam as a simple case of Communist aggression on the Korean model. He urged American air strikes against North Vietnam during the Tonkin Gulf episode in August 1964, and persuaded Lyndon Johnson to draft the ensuing congressional resolution so broadly that it would

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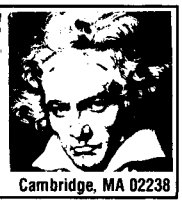

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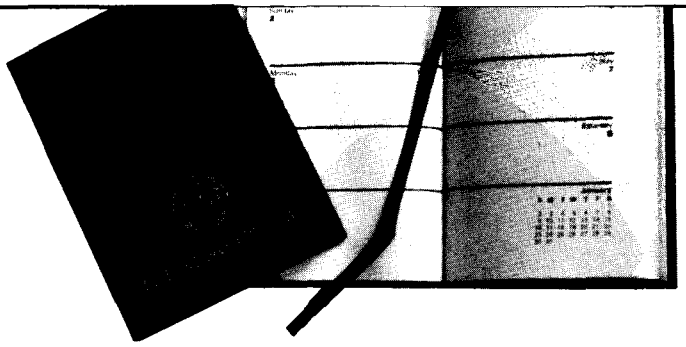
provide carte blanche for escalation once the November elections were safely over. Rusk advised Johnson that "everything possible" should be done "to throw back the Hanoi Vietnam aggression without a major war if possible."

Rusk was a true believer in the war. After most of the other earlier enthusiasts, such as McGeorge Bundy and Robert McNamara, changed their minds and slipped away, he stayed on to fight the good cause. Vilified and ridiculed by anti-war protesters, he sometimes seemed sincerely puzzled. "I have always tried to be a man of peace," he told a colleague. "I have worked for peace all my life, but now I have become a symbol of this war." Finally, by early 1968, even Rusk realized that the game was over, and played a key role, according to Schoenbaum, in persuading Johnson to accept a political settlement and withdraw American troops.

ONE MUST have enormous sympathy for an honorable man trying to live by homilies that ultimately failed him. He had defined his life in terms of loyalty and service to those at the top, though in the end they were not particularly loyal to him. Like them, he saw foreign policy as an affair of elites, and thus, as Schoenbaum observes of the Vietnam War, he treated Congress as "basically a body to be manipulated," and the American public "much in the same manner."

To the end Rusk has remained a prisoner of his class, with no higher goal than to be of service and not make too many mistakes. Often enough he said his desire was to leave the next secretary of state with problems no worse than he had found when he took office. He never saw himself as a problem solver, least of all as an innovator, but rather as a gardener. His concerns were to prune, to weed, to protect from hungry marauders, such as Communists abroad and a prying media at home.

A religious man, Rusk believed that both human beings and nation-states should be governed by moral principles. In foreign affairs this meant international law, which he saw as the criterion for relations among states. War, he reasoned, occurred not from the failure of such "international law" to accommodate political change, but from the unwillingness of law-abiding nations to restrain the lawbreakers. Like Woodrow Wilson, who had earlier espoused such ideas, he believed that the rule of law came to the United States through Great



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Britain, and thus America had, as Schoenbaum explains Rusk's views, "a special mission in raising the moral standard of international society."

It was this absolute conviction about the morality of his actions that made him so rigid, so infuriatingly sanctimonious. There was no way of moving him by the normal foreign policy calculations of self-interest, of marginal return on investments, of cutting losses. Foreign policy was not a way of preserving privileges, in the case of the haves, or cutting new deals, in the case of the have-nots; it was a struggle between moral people and immoral ones. By this reasoning, the Vietnamese Communists were simply lawbreakers who had to be put in their place by those whose task was to uphold international law. Rusk never ceased repeating that the war would not be over until Hanoi ended its aggression.

For a man who spent most of his professional life dealing with issues of foreign policy, Rusk seemed to have had little understanding of what motivated nations to behave as they did. Despite his good intentions, he did not, as he had hoped, leave his successor with problems no worse than he had found. He left problems considerably worse. From the perspective of January 1969, when he and Johnson left office, January 1961 must have seemed idyllic indeed.

Rusk can hardly be blamed, of course, for the great calamities of American foreign policy during his years in office—nor for the great successes, for that matter. It is unfortunate that his name is saddled with the lost cause in Vietnam; of all those who led and kept the nation in that war, his motives were the most idealistic. But they were also the most divorced from reality, the most resistant to compromise, and thus the most dangerous. It is not enough to be a good man when one holds an office of great power. It will not do to view the struggles among nations as traffic violations, to interpret great revolutionary upheavals as simple incidents of lawbreaking.

The tragedy of this decent man was that he was pushed one step too high, into an arena where his natural qualities of humility and empathy were of little avail, where attributes of cunning and compromise were required that he did not possess. He should have been left at the Rockefeller Foundation to dispense the conscience money of the rich in good causes whose worth he understood. He was the perfect chief of staff, and he continued playing that role even when he moved into the front office. His superiors blessed Rusk for being too good to be true, but a pitiless history will more likely judge him to have been too true to be good.

RONALD STEEL

DARKNESS WITHIN DARKNESS

Tao Te Ching
translated by Stephen Mitchell

(Harper & Row, 108 pp., $15.95)

The *Tao Te Ching* has been tantalizing the Chinese mind for more than 2,000 years. Prior to the unification of China in 221 B.C., it was already a well-known text, but under a different title, as the *Book of Lao Tzu*. In the beginning of the first century B.C., Ssu-ma Ch'ien, the grand historian at the court of Emperor Wu of Han, wrote the first official biography of the author of *Lao Tzu*; he simply followed tradition and assumed the author to be Lao Tzu, the guardian of the archives and a ritual specialist in the royal Chou State around the time of Confucius (552-476 B.C.).

According to Ssu-ma Ch'ien, Confucius once called on Lao Tzu, who told his eminent visitor that "his ingratiating manners and excessive ambitions" seemed all too obvious. Crestfallen, Confucius went home and reported to his disciples that he had just seen a "dragon." Although stories of Confucius's encounter with a ritual expert named Lao Tan had been widely circulated since the fourth century B.C., they had no historical basis. Ssu-ma Ch'ien merely wrote his own version, but he was not certain whether Lao Tan was actually the author of *Lao Tzu*. Still, his account of the purported meeting between the two wise men served another purpose: "[This goes to show that] the followers of Lao Tzu try to belittle the Confucianists, and the Confucianists likewise belittle the followers of Lao Tzu."

This kind of distinction was important to the Han doxographers, who in their attempt to reconstruct the discourse of the Chou period created such categories as *tao-chia* (the school of the Tao) and *fa-chia* (the school of standards and law or Legalism), in order to give ideas of a particular kind a collective identity and coherent voice. Each school of thought was also imparted with a beginning. On this reading, the school of Tao had a mythological origin. The grand historian tells us:

> [Lao Tzu] lived in Chou for a long time, but seeing its decline, he departed; when he reached the Pass, the Keeper Yin was pleased and said to him, "As you are about to withdraw to your solitude, could you write a book for my sake?" As a result, Lao Tzu wrote a work in two books, setting out the meaning of the way (*tao*) and virtue (*te*) in some five thousand characters, and then departed. None knew where he went to in the end.

There was no apparent reason why Ssu-ma Ch'ien, having divided the *Lao Tzu* into two books, named the first *tao* and the second *te*. Perhaps *tao* and *te* evoked some forgotten tales or myths. And not just *tao* and *te*, but all 5,000 characters in the text, alone or together, as a sound or an image, as adages or poems, have the power to restore a primeval experience of the world; these were words still full of sense, not yet fragmented to fit a reality.

What about the ideas pronounced in the texts? They are strange. The speaker is also strange. He recalls "drinking from the Great Mother's breasts" and believes that "the soft overcomes the hard; the gentle overcomes the rigid." He muses about the virtuous water and the mysterious female, and describes the masters of the old, who were "well versed in the way," as

> Tentative as if crossing a stream in winter.
> Hesitant as if in enemy territory.
> Reserved like a guest.
> Fluid as melting ice.
> Genuine like an uncarved block.
> Open like a valley.
> Murky like muddy water.

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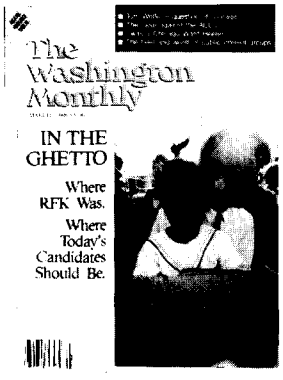

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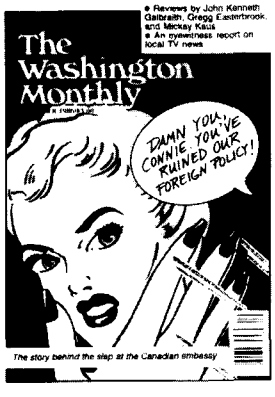
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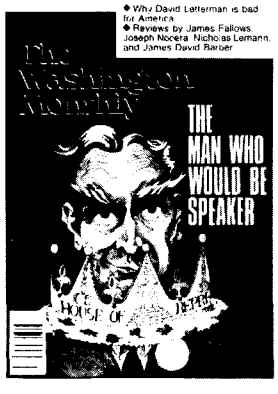

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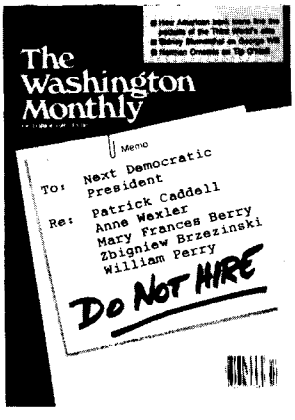

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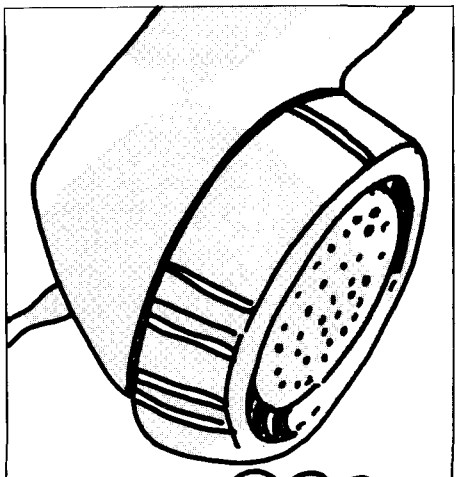

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He also contradicts common sense, which the Confucians call our "common moral sense." Chapter 19 says, "Throw away sageliness and wisdom, / and people will be a hundred times happier. / Throw away benevolence and rectitude, / and people will again be filial and compassionate." He knows that truths are shrouded in paradoxes, and so he begins his own telling with a paradox: "The tao that can be told / is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named / is not the eternal Name."

CHINESE READERS have always been cautious about their judgment of the *Tao Te Ching*. Here I refer not only to the Confucian purists of the past but also to the broad-minded social historians and critics of this century, Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and Lu Hsun being two notable examples. Perhaps they sense the presence of an all-knowing mind and they fear his power. When they read

> In order to shrink something,
> you must first allow it to expand.
> In order to have something weakened,
> you must first strengthen it.
> In order to dispose something,
> you must first allow it to flourish.
> . . . . . .
> The instruments of power in a state must
> not be revealed to anyone,

they also hear a voice pronouncing words such as *ch'iang* and *jo* (weakness and strength), *fei* and *hsing* (discord and flourish), *yu-yü* and *wu-yü* (having desires and free from desires), and the utterance—both the sound and the meaning of these words—feels oppressively inhuman, without a trace of "softness" or "gentleness."

Western readers are drawn to the *Tao Te Ching*, however, because of its strangeness, and sometimes because of what they think they hear when they read: "Yet mystery and manifestations / arise from the same source. / This source is called darkness." For them the text possesses the amazing power of returning a person to a beginning when she was "murky like muddy water," unable to tell "this" from "that."

The *Tao Te Ching* is the most frequently translated of all Chinese works, and now there is a new English version by Stephen Mitchell. Mitchell is an extraordinary scholar and translator. He is capable of accomplishing the nearly impossible, of rendering not only words, but their senses and rhythms. His translation of Rilke's *Duino Elegies*, for instance, allows the reader to vanish totally into the motion of words; for a moment one is breathless and thoughtless, and it is only English.

MITCHELL'S rendition of the *Tao Te Ching* is beautiful and accessible; again the English, as "fluid as melting ice," is a joy to read throughout. For those who love the Chinese text, however, it remains problematic, because we are not sure if it is the *Tao Te Ching*. The strength of the original lies in its ambiguity—in the presence of light and darkness, a play of light and darkness, an indistinctness of light and darkness. Mitchell chooses to see mainly the light.

His translation of the last lines of the first chapter reads: "Darkness within darkness / The gateway to all understanding," when the original actually says, "Darkness within darkness / The gateway to all subtleties." "Understanding" is a subject for Mitchell, and he interprets the *Tao Te Ching* in that light: "Can you cleanse your inner vision / until you see nothing but the light"; "If you open yourself to insight (*te*), / you are one with insight and you can use it completely"; "Thus the Master is available to all people / and doesn't reject anyone. / He is ready to use all situations / and doesn't waste anything. / This is called embodying the light." One can argue, of course, that the word "*te*," meaning virtue or power, does not even suggest an inner vision, but the argument would be pointless, because there Mitchell caught the spirit of the text, and the intent of its author.

Other passages are not so easy to reconcile. For instance, his rendition of Chapter 59 contains this luminous passage:

> The mark of a moderate man
> is freedom from his own ideas.
> Tolerant like the sky,
> all-pervading like sunlight,
> firm like a mountain,
> supple like a tree in the wind,
> he has no destination in view
> and makes use of anything
> life happens to bring his way.

The original has none of this glow. It is opaque and leaden. The Chinese text made vague references to the importance of "being sparing" and the necessity of "accumulating virtues heavily" in order "to gain the constancy of things." The lines where these references were embedded have completely vanished in the present English version. Furthermore, the "moderate man" of Mitchell's ren-

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dering is actually a ruler, who "overcomes everything" and whose "limit no one knows." There is no trace of sky or sunlight in this part of Chapter 59, not even a supple tree in the wind, only "deep roots" and "firm stems" by which one can "endure" and "live to see many days." The "Master" who appears in the translated text is a simplified persona because he never deviates from Mitchell's perception of him: He remains "tolerant like the sky," seeing "things as they are, / without trying to control them." The reader never has to know, for instance, that even though the Master "let all things transform of their accord," "should desire arise," he warns, "I shall press it down with the weight of a nameless uncarved block."

Mitchell also chooses to see Lao Tzu as good. Thus Chapter 3 reads, "The Master leads / by emptying people's minds / and filling their cores." "Cores" is a marvelous word, elemental and suggestive. Those who love the *Tao Te Ching* probably wish that Lao Tzu had actually uttered it; but he didn't. He simply said, "The Master governs by emptying people's minds / and filling their stomachs (*fu*)," which, of course, is troubling, because the reader is no longer certain of the author's intention. Likewise, in Chapter 65, Lao Tzu told us that ancient masters "did not try to enlighten people but to hoodwink them." In the present interpretation, "the ancient Masters / didn't try to educate the people, / but kindly taught them to not know." To leap from "to educate" to "to not know" is a gentle, subtle act of undoing, but not what Lao Tzu wanted to convey in this passage. Here he was forthright with his listener, who had to be a ruler, advising him not to bestow light on people but to keep them in the dark.

TO BE FAIR to Mitchell, the dark figure in Chapter 3 and Chapter 65 is an anomaly that deviates from the central image in the rest of the text: a man (or a woman, the Chinese is ambiguous) who embodies a goodness that is beyond the distinction of good and bad. "She gives [all things] life yet claims no possession. / She acts but does not expect." How do we explain the peculiarity, then, that the Master was the ultimate good, but now she is not? Or should we try at all? Contradictions are present throughout the *Tao Te Ching*, adding complexities to a texture already paradoxically rich. They are the reasons why the text is "used but never used up."

Chuang Tzu, the other great Taoist thinker, as well as the transmogrifier and the dreamer, told the story of Cook Ting, who had mastered the way of "carving up [literally disjoining] an ox." In Burton Watson's splendid translation this reads as follows:

> At every touch of his hand, every heave of his shoulder, every move of his feet, every thrust of his knee—zip! Zoop! He slithered the knife along with a zing, and all was in perfect rhythm, as though he were performing the dance of the Mulberry grove or keeping time to Ching-chou music.

Cook Ting described to his lord how he had acquired his art. At first there was the ox, but after three years there was no ox and now "I go at it by spirit and don't look with my eyes. Perception and understanding have come to a stop and spirit moves where it wants." Mitchell wants to do the same with translation, to experience it as a dance of the Mulberry Grove. He explains in his foreword the meaning of "doing not-doing" (*wei-wu-wei*), an odd and often misinterpreted idea in the *Tao Te Ching* because of its apparent paradox. So that this phrase not be seen as passivity, he writes, "['Doing not-doing'] is the most effective form of action. The game plays the game; the poem writes the poem; we can't tell the dancer from the dance."

It is obvious that Mitchell believes not just dancers and artisans, but translators, too, are capable of "doing not-doing." But translators have not one ox, but two massive oxen, to undo, each with its own complicated structure of bones, joints, and ligaments. They must first make sense of a particular reality through an exploration of words; then a metamorphosis of sense follows; then sense is again shaped by words that have meaning for a different reality. In his other work, Stephen Mitchell has demonstrated that he is the Cook Ting of translators. But this time an ox is missing, and so his sense of the text is cut off from the fully bodied word.

ANN-PING CHIN

Ann-Ping Chin teaches in the religion department at Wesleyan University and is the author of *Children of China: Voices from Recent Years* (Knopf).

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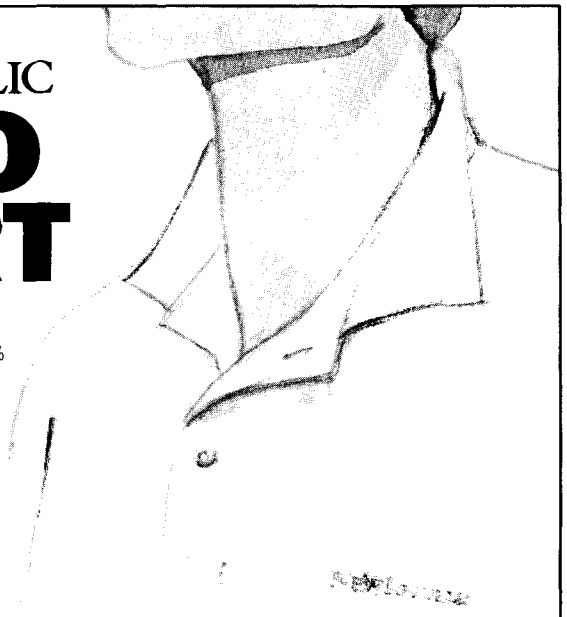

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

Merry FAXmas

IF TNR WERE TO choose a Man or Woman of the Year for its cover, my nomination for 1988 would be the five nuns of the Discalced Carmelites of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel in Morris Township, New Jersey, who this fall barricaded themselves in their monastery in protest against the introduction of modern comforts to their cloistered life. The worldly distractions against which they revolted, all introduced by Mother Teresa Hewitt since she took over the monastery a year ago, include "television, newspapers, radio, snacks, and a high-tech lighting system in the chapel," according to the Catholic journal *Crisis*. These nuns are the sanest people of whom I have read all year, joyful models for us in this season of universal gorging and gouging. They are simply saying that they do not wish to clutter their lives. I never stroll through a shopping mall without observing that the display of goods includes almost none of the necessities of life. Shoes, we may think, are necessary; but then, of course, the *Discalced* Carmelites go unshod. The gross national product in America now feeds a gross national appetite for the conspicuous consumption of vanities. The "curse of plenty" against which Churchill warned is now a disease and daily distraction. The nuns are speaking to us. Perhaps it is the society as a whole that needs to take a vow of poverty.

IN THE LAST two decades one product that has come to be conspicuously and ravenously consumed is paper, and no city has a more voracious maw for it than Washington. The *Washington Post* the other day ran a story on "New Age Printing," the booming demand for "quick printing" and copying of many varieties. One local printer of 40 years' standing said: "Washington's appetite for paper is the hungriest I've seen." The electronic and other technological advances that were expected to create a paperless society have instead made it easier to commit words to print. This office is not alone in now having a nerve center that houses three gadgets: a copier; the printer for the word processors; and what is called a FAX, the silliest toy for adults yet invented. No nun would believe how much paper these machines spew forth in a day. It is no coincidence that the noise made by these machines is a chatter; the FAX even begins to chatter to itself in the middle of the night. On a much larger scale this is going on all over Washington. Why should the nuns not close their ears to the chatter that distracts us? As they might point out, things were said much more clearly when Moses had to carve the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone. In place of the printout machine and the FAX, in the new year, let us substitute slabs of granite and a chisel.

TO SUPPLY OUR paper, forests must die. Yet in all the chatter around us we scarcely notice that Weyerhauser, the tree-slaughtering company, claims in its commercials to be "The Tree-Growing Company." In no Weyerhauser ad do you see a tree fall. Moreover, Weyerhauser appears also to be The Eagle Preservation Company and The Bambi Protection Company. We are surrounded by lies, and in the chatter do not notice them. GMAC calls itself "The Official Sponsor of the American Dream." Who appointed it the *official* sponsor? And how elevated is the Dream it finances? Without television, newspaper, and radio, the nuns will hear the tidings of comfort and joy this Christmas. We will be deafened to them by the hectoring disinformation of the ads of the merchandisers.

IN A SAVAGE line in his poem "Bess," about an elderly woman who always helped her neighbors and is dying of cancer, William Stafford contrasts the significance of this local happening with "the grotesque fake importance of great national events" that usually seize the headlines. The words should be placed on the desks of every editor, anchorman, and columnist. It is no wonder that I noticed, when I traveled 13,000 miles by road around the country in 1984, that again and again ordinary Americans switched on the local news, then kept it on for the network news—with the sound turned off! Why should they, any more than the nuns, be subjected to the chatter? But the event that has seized the headlines this Christmas is not fake. The earthquake in Armenia makes national and ideological differences look trifling. It is also a reminder that, in however tragic a form, the Christ child was born to be the Prince of Peace. It is all the more sad, therefore, that not even for a few days could the Armenian protest leaders forgo the opportunity to press their political demands. The chatter of politics in the world today leads more and more to rage.

SINCE THE PROBLEM has never occurred to me before, I have spent much of 1988 trying to discover why we say "Ooops!" when we almost bump into each other, or catch ourselves in some minor error. I calculate that I hear "Ooops!" 20 or 30 times a day, not least because the corridor in this office has a sharp L-turn, where I am constantly bumping into attractive young ladies. We each say "Ooops!" I have consulted every full dictionary. None helps. I have also called the press offices of various embassies, and found that in their countries people say something like "Ooops!" except for a rather snooty, firm French denial that they would ever use the Franglais "Ooops!" I will personally award a bottle of vintage port of a fine year to any reader who can explain when "Ooops!" entered the language, and why we say "Ooops!" and not "Aaarps!" or "Uuups!"

THE BEST NEWS OUT of Washington in 1988 is that the Redskins are sunk. Nothing excites the Christmas spirit more than the sight of the proud and mighty being humbled. They join their humbled sporting cousins the Baltimore Orioles, the American League East cellar-dwellers just purchased for $70 million by a New York investor who has made his fortune by shifting around paper in lieu of money. Too bad the Orioles' new owner couldn't have spared some change for the New York Historical Society. The *New York Times* recently carried yet another story about the Society's efforts to scrape together a few million to save it from insolvency, rescue some of its damaged archives and other treasures, and expand its role. When one estimates the numbers of enormously rich people and corporations who operate in New York, it is a shaming Christmas thought that they cannot adequately support the Historical Society of the most historical city in the United States, out of which they have gouged their millions. Baseball or history, FAX or facts? We know which our culture chooses. The five nuns chose better.

HENRY FAIRLIE

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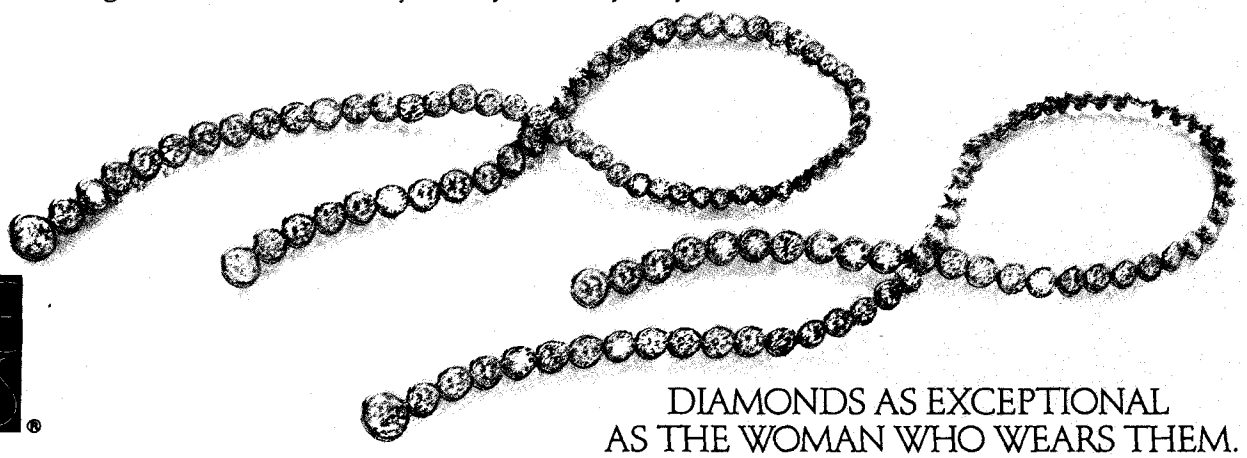

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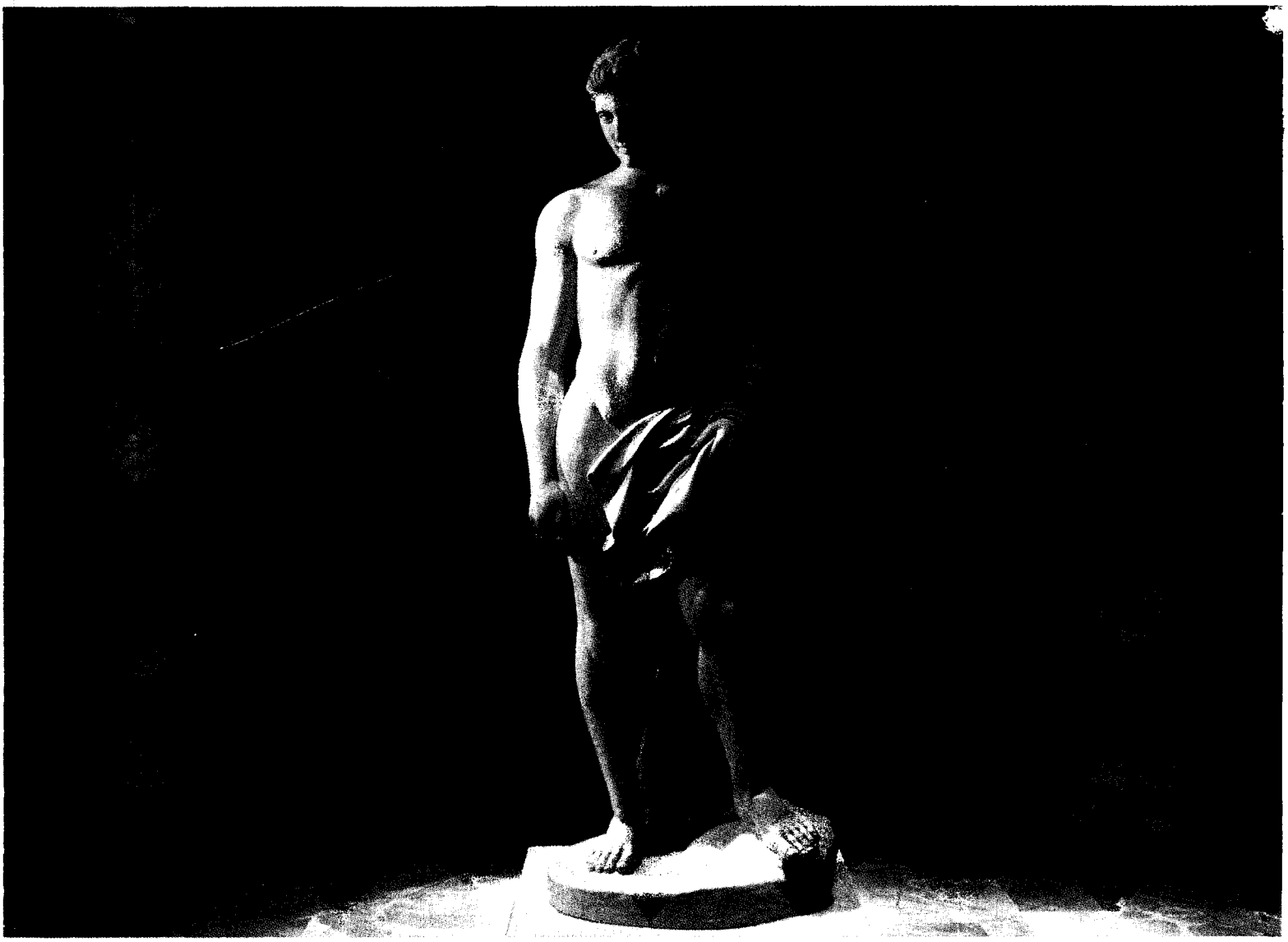

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